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The New REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

VOL. LXXVIII NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18, 1934 NUMBER 1011

Contents

The Week 253

Editorials

Roosevelt Drifts Right 256
Japan's Blind Alley 258
A New Threat to Neutrality 259

General Articles

Ivory Towers to Let ..... Malcolm Cowley 260
American Jeremiad (verse) ..... Alfred Kreymborg 263
"Crazy Like a Fox" ..... Arthur Graham 264
What's Happening in the Cotton Belt ..... Renwick C. Kennedy 266
The Artistic Future of Poetry ..... Stephen Spender 268
Washington Notes ..... T. R. B. 270
Buildings Should Not Be Tall (verse) ..... Kenneth Burke 271
Other People's Money ..... John T. Flynn 271
The Desert, the Dare Boys and Coney ..... Otis C. Ferguson 272

Correspondence 273

Moor Born ..... Stark Young 275

Spring Book Section

These Jews Were Germans ..... Nathan Asch 276
Let There Be Wealth ..... Willard E. Atkins 277
A Great Reporter ..... Ella Winter 277
When Pilots Disagree ..... Ernest Sutherland Bates 278
"T. E. Lawrence" ..... Lincoln Kirstein 279
Go-Ahead Davy ..... Caroline Gordon 280
Good Books Almost Nobody Has Read ..... M. C. 281
Truth and Some New Fictions ..... T. S. Matthews 284
Worth Reprinting ..... Frederic G. Melcher 285
Statesmen Off Parade ..... John Bakeless 285
The Second British Empire ..... C. Hartley Grattan 286
Conspiring for Status Quo ..... William McAndrew 286
A Spotlight on the South ..... Hamilton Basso 287
The Christian Realist ..... Robert Morss Lovett 288
The Well Worn Spirit ..... Conrad Aiken 289
Shorter Poetry Reviews ..... John Gould Fletcher and James Neugass 291

The Week

THE ambiguity of the labor settlement in the automobile industry is already beginning to cause the trouble which The New Republic predicted when it was announced. A strike has occurred in plants making motor parts; terms of settlement handed down by the Automobile Labor Board were torn up by the strikers, and a better settlement has been reached after the direct intervention of Edward F. McGrady of the N.R.A. staff in Washington. The Mechanics' Educational Society, an independent union of tool and die-makers, which has declined to recognize the new board, threatens to strike unless its demands for recognition and higher wages are granted by the employers. Most important of all, the A.F. of L. unions in the plants of the principal automobile manufacturers are criticizing the Automobile Labor Board for its delay in settling the question concerning who represents the workers. They believe they are the genuine representatives, and are prepared to submit demands the moment the Board decides in their favor, as they believe it ought to. The Board has been busy considering the many complaints of discrimination; the unions protest that they can handle these complaints once they are recognized and begin to bargain, but if the Board does not pass on the main question of representation until all the complaints are settled, it will not do so until after the busy season is over and the unions' bargaining power is at ebb tide. As a result, they are likely to submit demands and threaten a strike without waiting for the Labor Board.

THE delay of the Automobile Labor Board in deciding the status of the genuine unions is probably due to a shrewd guess that any decision it makes is bound to cause trouble. If it grants the unions the status to which they believe they are entitled, power to represent the majority of the workers and make agreements that will in fact be binding on all employees, regardless of the minority company unions, the employers are likely to reject the decision and the fat will be in the fire. If, on the other hand, the Board decides that collective bargaining is to be carried on by joint committees consisting of representatives of both the real unions and the company unions, the genuinely organized workers will conclude that they have been betrayed by the government and are likely to reject the decision. Thus the Board is in the uncomfortable position of having to expose the falsity of the settlement reached at the White House. President Roosevelt, in his eagerness to prevent a strike and arrive at a compromise, failed to obtain a meeting of minds on the basic issue of collective bargaining, and failed to face the issue himself. But glossing over the issue does not banish it. The danger of a strike still exists. Sooner or later there will be one unless the employers give up the attempt to control the representation of the workers and abandon their defense of the subservient company unions.

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IN THE case of the Minneapolis C.W.A. workers who, by "riotous demonstrations" forced the City Council to pass several local ordinances favorable to their cause, our sympathies are 100 percent with the rioters. The usual talk is being heard that the disorders were fomented by radicals whose real purpose is to overthrow our government; and as usual, this talk is largely nonsensical, and irrelevant when it isn't. These Minneapolis men and women were mainly demanding the right to work, even at desperately low wages, as an alternative to starvation. That their case was a good one is indicated by the fact that the City Council was already tied on the issue, and the rioters needed only to change one vote in order to get their victory. The callous inhumanity with which C.W.A. workers and other unemployed are being treated in Washington and in many localities throughout the country is inexcusable, and goes far to nullify all the humanitarian pretensions of the Roosevelt administration.

IN OUR issue of April 4, we wrote that "the C.W.A. has died only to be born again under another name"; and some of our readers have reproached us for this statement on the assumption that it meant approval for the way in which the government is setting about its program. No such approval was meant or implied, as the context of our article clearly showed. There is a terrible lag between dismissals from the C.W.A. and employment under the P.W.A., and the amount of work available under the latter falls short by millions of jobs of the number of persons who need and want employment. An enormous number of persons who were employed under the C.W.A. at tasks for which they were especially qualified will now get no work, or be used in ways that utterly waste their abilities. In a tremendous proportion of cases, the amounts to be paid will be almost cut in two, and reduced to a sum on which no family can live except in degrading poverty. Relief is given only to those in "need"—as though the whole C.W.A. army were not in need!—and the interpretation of need is so narrow that only those actually on the verge of starvation can meet it. In short, the Roosevelt administration is acting exactly as though it wanted to drive the whole 4,000,000 erstwhile C.W.A. workers, and their 8,000,000 or 10,000,000 dependents, into a mood of angry despair in which they will be fertile soil for the arguments of those who say that only through revolution can America be made a country free from the danger of starvation.

WHAT happened to C.W.A. workers in New York City is a good example of the clumsiness and cruelty with which the transition period is being handled; we have no reason to believe it is either better or worse than what has gone on elsewhere. A delegation of C.W.A. workers and unemployed returned from Washington and their endeavor to have the C.W.A. continued only to find it already disorganized. Public-welfare authorities had taken over, instituted mass lay-offs of workers on the ground they did not need their jobs and informed them of dismissal by telephone. Most of them have not yet had official, written notice of discharge. In certain cases, there seems good ground for believing that persons have been discharged because of their activity in organizing their fellow C.W.A. workers. The workers have not taken their treatment lying down. They met it standing up—marching to and fro before the office of Welfare Commissioner Hodson in a picket line from which thirteen were seized and arrested the first day. Hodson declared he did not want arrests for peaceful picketing, and since then the line has been unmolested by the police. But he refused for five days to hear delegates from the United Front (United Action Conference on C.W.A. and unemployment), which organized the pickets. When he finally received them he answered some questions not at all and evaded most others. The chief demand, for reinstatement of all discharged workers pending review of their cases and for cash relief to all unemployed, met with refusal on the grounds of insufficient funds. True—but would Mr. Hodson ask for an emergency appropriation from the Board of Estimate? He would not.

AS A result of the revelations by the Federal Trade Commission concerning the relationship between Senator Thayer of the New York State Senate and the Associated Gas and Electric Company, Governor Lehman has been able to force through the Senate his complete list of bills for utility reform. At first the Senate rejected two of the bills that contained the sharpest teeth—one making it easier for municipalities to own their own plants, and the other permitting the Public Service Commission to assess the cost of rate investigations upon the companies. But the Governor called the recalcitrant Democrats into conference, and the Senate reconsidered its action. As a result of pressure both from the Governor and from W. Kingsland Macy, Republican State Chairman, the Senate has also consented to a broad investigation of the relations between utility corporations and Senators, instead of confining the investigation solely to the question whether Thayer should be expelled. One of the juiciest tidbits in the whole affair is that there has turned up as counsel for Senator Thayer—who do you suppose? None other than Clayton R. Lusk, who as a State Senator after the War conducted an investigation into "radical activities" and issued the notorious Red-baiting Lusk reports. Partly as a result of that worthy enterprise, Socialist members of the legislature were expelled. Mr. Lusk evidently believes that Senators who represent the private utilities are the truest patriots.

IT HAS remained for Mr. Charles E. Mitchell, former chairman of the National City Bank, to provide us with something funnier even than Dr.

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Wirt's remarks about the Brain Trust. It will be remembered that during Mr. Mitchell's days with the National City he was paid $3,500,000 in bonuses in three years, in addition to his salary of $25,000 a year. Some of the stockholders are now engaged in litigation regarding the policies of the bank, and Mr. Mitchell, put on the stand, testified that his enormous bonuses were desirable because of their beneficial effect on the morale of the younger men in the organization. He was cross-examined by the attorney for the stockholders:

> When you told us . . . that these young men in your organization were aided in their morale . . . you didn't mean that they knew you actually received this figure? [One million dollars in one year.]
>
> No, I did not. . . .

As a matter of fact, there was a large secret fund out of which Mr. Mitchell and a few other of the higher officials of the bank voted staggering payments to one another. In addition to bonuses, there were loans. Of $2,400,000 loaned to a few officers in a short period of time, only about 5 percent had been paid back at the date of the investigation last year. One man "borrowed" $300,000 and has paid back $11,000. Another man also "borrowed" $300,000 and has paid back nothing. Some of these officers left the bank's employ and no visible effort was made to have them return any of the money they had thus obtained. Meanwhile, customers of the bank were sold out remorselessly. Small-salaried employees who were buying bank stock on the instalment plan at a price of $200 a share were forced to go on making payments even when the stock had dropped to $40 a share. It is well to remember that when Mr. Mitchell talks about keeping up morale, he means the morale of an extremely limited group of insiders, who ladled out millions to one another with the lordly generosity of pirates dividing the loot from a prize. The overwhelming majority of the bank's workers knew nothing of what was going on, were given no "encouragement" of this sort and were actually penalized heavily for being foolish enough to believe the official doctrine of the bank regarding the value of its securities. The less of Mr. Mitchell's kind of morale we have, the better, obviously, for America.

A THREE-SIDED war has been raging in what is probably the least known inhabited portion of the earth's surface—Sinkiang, formerly called Chinese Turkestan. Ostensibly the three contending factions are, first, the Mohammedan natives of the southern part of the province, around Kashgar; second, the wilder Mohammedan tribesmen of the north; and third, the Chinese provincial government. Actually the Sinkiang war, in which many thousands have been killed and 2,000 massacred in a single night, is being fought among three of the Great Powers: Great Britain, Japan and Russia. But this statement, too, must be qualified. Russia is not really a party to the war, has shown no wish to conquer Sinkiang and has maintained extremely friendly relations with the Chinese provincial government. Since the building of the new Turksib railway, these relations had indeed become entirely too friendly and had involved too flourishing a trade to suit the ambitions of Great Britain and Japan. Both of these powers would like to occupy Sinkiang. It is a territory about 400,000 square miles in area, mostly desert, with natural resources that have not yet been mapped and a population of only 2,000,000—but it occupies an important strategic position, since it lies on the northern border of India and since it could easily serve as a base for an attack on the Soviet Union.

IT IS generally taken for granted that the Japanese have been sending money and arms to the Mohammedan tribesmen of the north; and the charge that the southern rebels are armed with British rifles and are receiving direct advice from British agents in Kashgar has been made often and on weighty authority, both Russian and Chinese. The struggle in Sinkiang is still undecided. The pro-Japanese faction was defeated by the Chinese provincial government in the north and thereupon moved south to fight against the pro-British faction, which had meanwhile set up an "independent" state. Meanwhile a note of light comedy was injected into a situation full of danger for the world by a United Press report from London to the effect that Dr. Khalid Sheldrake, the son of a British pickle manufacturer, would soon be crowned as "King of Islamestan"—which is nothing else than Sinkiang, or Chinese Turkestan, under a new name. His wife was interviewed in Forest Hill, a London suburb, and announced that she was going to Islamestan with her two sons for the coronation. "I intend," she said, "to take my responsibility as queen seriously." She had better take it seriously. The desert tribesmen are fair-to-middling shots, whether their ammunition comes from Mitsui or Vickers.

OREGON has discovered a weapon to block the less genteel forms of utility robbery. It goes under the name of "budget censorship" and consists of the requirement that all utilities in the state have their budgets approved by the Public Utility Commissioner. If the Commissioner refuses to confirm an item in the budget the utility is not permitted to charge that item to either operating expenses or capital account. In other words, no utility can stuff up its expenses for the benefit of its officers or of its parent corporation and expect the people of Oregon to carry the charge in the rates they have to pay. Since the sacred right of cooking the books is fast replacing the sacred right of private contract as the keystone of our fiscal arch, it is not surprising that the courtrooms of Oregon ring with the deep voices of high-priced utility lawyers. The first—and not the least logical—victim of this Oregon idea is that holy of financial holies, that great public

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servant and friend of mankind, the American Telephone and Telegraph Company. Its subsidiary, the Pacific T. & T., has been forbidden to pay the A. T. & T. $101,000 for the privilege of "renting" telephone equipment from the parent. Naturally the order has instantly been carried by the Telephone Company into the higher realms of equity, there to wriggle from injunction to injunction until some day the Supreme Court decides the constitutionality of Oregon's weapon. In the meantime it is a good hint to other states.

AN INTERESTING result of the Petroleum Code—and one not altogether welcome to the small service-station companies—is the rapid spread of coöperatives. As the Code was originally drawn, only coöperatives composed strictly of farmers were allowed to pay consumer dividends to the purchaser-members, but this rather absurd limitation was removed in the final draft and the formation of oil-distributing coöperatives is now spreading rapidly in New England and above all in the Middle West. The Code forbids both price cutting and rebates, but the payment of earned profits of coöperatives back to their consumer members avoids this prohibition and enables the members to save as much as two cents a gallon on their gasoline. It is no wonder that the profit-making distributing companies point with horror to the growth of coöperatives and bewail the passing of the private American business man—at least in gasoline distribution. To their credit, however, is that fact that they are pleading with the Code Authority, not to forbid the coöperatives but to allow the private distributor to offer a competitive price. Yet once again the lesson is enforced that the only legitimate aim of fixing minimum prices is not to save the profit of the inefficient competitor but to prevent cutthroat competition at the expense of labor standards. How the one can be distinguished from the other under private enterprise remains a problem.

WITH the best official good will in the world the governments of France and Great Britain have pretty well destroyed all trade between their countries. From a mutual exchange estimated at 12,000,000,000 francs in 1928, their commerce in 1933 fell to 3,800,000,000, and today is on the way to ceasing altogether. The case is an example of the grave dangers of the use of reprisals. France began the trouble with a 15-percent extra import duty to compensate for the fall of the pound. After enduring that for well over a year, England began threatening to impose a special import duty on French goods. The threatened reprisal, instead of driving France to remove the tax, drove her into further penalties. To be sure the tax itself was suppressed, but a quota system was adopted instead, permitting only a quarter of the imports made during the years when the 15-percent duty was in force. The British answer to this was a 20-percent duty on the principal French imports into England. It was thought that this would bring the French around to the British view, force them to admit more British goods, and so forth. Instead the French chose the other, and equally logical, answer. They denounced the treaties of trade and navigation of 1826 and 1882. These do not go out of effect until May, but if by that date no commercial adjustment has been made, the two nations will scarcely be able to exchange anything, or even dock vessels in each other's ports.

IN LAST week's New Republic we referred to the forthcoming publication of a book, "My Road to Hitler," written by Karl Severing, and commented critically on the reported conversion of its author, in the light of several excerpts from his new work cabled to this country by a Berlin correspondent of The New York Times. Since then, it has been proved that the quotations in question were taken verbatim from the Communist Saarbrücken "Volkszeitung," which had inexcusably united a series of quotations from Severing's past writings and speeches, plus a little of their own composition, into a pretended quotation from his new book, and only indicated elsewhere in the issue and in very small type that this material was not what it was represented to be. As was to be expected, the case has created much acrimonious discussion. Out of it all one gathers the following undisputed facts: that a book by Severing is to be published by the "coordinated" Ullstein press; that the ex-Minister was granted an audience by Hermann Göring and that since March 15 he is in receipt of a "transition pension." To the pension, to be sure, he is legally entitled. But it remains a fact that, with but two known exceptions—the widow of the late President Ebert and Gustav Noske—such pensions were denied to all officials dismissed by the present government for their political convictions. Certainly Herr Severing is being treated with singular tenderness by the Hitler government, singular for one who is, as his supporters insist, true to the principles of the Social Democrats.

Roosevelt Drifts Right

ALMOST from the first months of Roosevelt's administration the statement has been made that he was confronted with a choice between turning to the right or to the left. In crisis after crisis it has been predicted that now at last he must choose. But, apparently, he never has chosen. He has aimed at conciliating everybody, at keeping well nigh unanimous support. No sooner did he say or do something that seemed like facing in one direction than he said or did something else that seemed like facing in the other. As a politician, he is adept at the art of compromise and at making everyone feel happy about it. No doubt he believes he has thus been able to ride the wild horses and make some progress. But the circumstances were such that a middle course was impossible. Having failed

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resolutely to turn left, he has steadily drifted toward the right. If his action were charted, it would describe a curve with a large number of minor variations, but with a decided trend, over the months, back to old-style capitalism.

A listing of the issues on which he has given way supplies evidence of the manner in which he has gradually been pushed toward the conservative position. He began by failing to demand legislation for drastic reorganization of the banking system immediately after the crisis of a year ago; nothing more is heard now of fundamental banking legislation. Neither in the last session of Congress nor in this has he backed any thoroughgoing revision of the taxes on incomes and corporate profits; he has tried to stop some of the leaks in part, but a complete program of tax revision is still postponed. Without a struggle he allowed the Senate to defeat the St. Lawrence waterway; whatever may be thought of the project, he was driven from his former vigorous support of it by a powerful lobby consisting chiefly of railroad and utility interests. Frightened by the propaganda consequent upon cancellation of the air-mail contracts, he is about to give the subsidies back to private companies. After expressing, directly or indirectly, much concern over the injury to consumers by price-raising provisions in the N.R.A. codes, and after hearings in Washington that brought forth damning evidence on this score, he has done nothing at all to impose any real control over organized business in the interest of the consumers.

Having backed the National Labor Board in its somewhat belated and ineffectual attempts to outlaw company unions, and having given tacit support to the original Wagner Industrial Disputes Bill, he negotiated a compromise with the automobile makers giving company unions—regardless of the degree of employer control—an equal status with genuine unions. He has yielded to the Wall Street outcries by assenting to modification of the Securities Act, and the chances are that the bill to control the Stock Exchange will be so emasculated before passage as to be of little effect. The so-called Tugwell Bill introduced by Senator Copeland to strengthen the Pure Food and Drugs Act has been so altered in committee as a result of objections by protesting interests that it is hardly better than the existing law, and no objection has come from him. The chances are that the bill giving him power to reduce tariffs on a reciprocal basis will be killed by amendments in the Senate, fostered by protective interests, and the chances are that he will swallow it as amended. The C.W.A. has been abandoned; public works are to be allowed to peter out; no really adequate housing program is in sight. These are but the larger items of his surrender.

After each retreat, his enemies on the right have grown bolder. They have sensed in him the reluctance to pick a quarrel that might endanger his support by any powerful group, and have consequently exacted higher and higher prices for the continuance of peace. They have already run away with the first fruits of his program by raising prices and boosting profits as rapidly as relief and other expenditures have supplied any market at all. Increased profits have given them confidence, and have oiled the wheels of the old propaganda machinery. This runs true to form by attempting to squelch every progressive measure, by centering its fire upon all individuals who may influence the President in a direction considered hostile by the large interests, by reviving Red scares. If the New Deal in the end retains anything they dislike, they will not hesitate to attack it on all fronts and to attempt to unseat the President himself. He will find that the only way to retain their toleration is to become wholly their man.

But of course Roosevelt cannot do this except by forfeiting the support on the left, which he began to mobilize at the beginning of his term. Labor is already distrustful and dissatisfied, the farmers are restive, consumers in general complain about prices rising faster than their incomes. If the revival of profits continues at the expense of labor, farmers and consumers, if anything like inflation comes and stimulates a real clamor about the high cost of living, the President will have lost most of his popularity. Then he will have conciliated neither the right nor the left. His strength will wither in the crossfire.

There is even a good chance that the propaganda of the moneyed interests will cause popular discontent to maintain them in power, though the two sorts of complaints are logically opposite. Workers and farmers cheated by the promises of the administration, consumers suffering from high prices created by artificial scarcity, can be led by the nose to support the very capitalist interests that have brought about the scarcity and the high prices. This sort of thing has happened many times before, and can happen again. The chief safeguard against it would be an intelligent, fighting leadership on the left. Mr. Roosevelt missed the psychological moment to place himself at the head of such a movement. Many of his words and some of his acts implied that he would do so, but he did not follow through to produce the results he promised. No political tragedy is greater than that of the David who faces Goliath without any stones for his slingshot. He discredits not only himself but all other potential generals of his army who would make similar promises. He delivers the people to their enemies. If the leader of a popular movement for change, who speaks loudly but does little, can be called a Kerensky, it does not always follow that he is succeeded by a Lenin. He may just as readily be succeeded by a leader of the old regime, by a vengeful reaction.

Old-style capitalism is getting on its feet again and is preparing to repeat its habitual performance. It is defeating, one by one, the attempts at reform, in the interest of the only kind of recovery that it knows how to manage. This is a recovery in profits

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which leaves millions in poverty, a recovery that can end, not in general, secure prosperity, but only in a boom of smaller or larger proportions, to be followed by another collapse.

Japan's Blind Alley

LAST MONTH'S exchange of polite notes between the United States and Japan merely moves the tension between the two nations to a plane of better manners. The problem of changing the naval ratios and the problem of recognition of Manchukuo are not advanced, and the really deep underlying difficulty, Russia, is not even mentioned by implication. No doubt there is a base of profound economic conflict beneath the tangle of Japanese-American relations, but the point at which this disharmony comes to focus at this particular moment is much more distinctly political. It boils down to the simple proposition that the Roosevelt administration has said as plainly as such things can be expressed in the language of diplomacy that the United States would look with distinct disfavor upon any Japanese move against the Eastern dominions of the Soviet Union. How far that disfavor would be carried nobody knows.

The Japanese ruling groups consider themselves in a snarl from which war may be the easiest way to cut themselves clear. The fervent declarations of many Western critics that they are deliberately courting war may indeed be exaggerated, but their easy willingness to resort to it cannot be disputed. Since 1931 almost every incident in Japanese foreign relations has been used to further the program of domestic military expansion. The civil government, purged by the expulsion or assassination of such liberal leaders as Shidehara and Inouye, has been thoroughly cowed and the temper of the people has been kept at white heat by a drastically censored press and an active, incessant and completely unscrupulous military propaganda. No word of criticism is allowed, while the demands of the army and navy for constantly increasing appropriations have invariably been granted. Any hesitation on the part of the government is overcome by the threat of the establishment of a military dictatorship.

The civil authorities in consequence have gradually become more and more abject in their subservience. Even Count Uchida, who was originally placed in office as Foreign Minister by the army itself, resigned when unable to approve the unlimited appropriations for the war departments. His place was filled by the reactionary Koki Hirota, ex-protégé of Mitsuru Toyama, the organizer of the most notorious of the secret super-patriotic societies. Or again there is Admiral Suetsuga, who published a syndicated series of lurid war stories illustrating how the Japanese navy was going to destroy the American. (Copies of papers carrying the stories were seized and destroyed by the American customs officers at Hawaii.) Such talk was officially deplored in the Japanese Diet—but Admiral Suetsuga was none the less soon promoted to Commander-in-Chief of the combined fleets.

The militarist propaganda has been entirely successful in stimulating a chauvinistic bellicosity that is almost without modern parallel. No opportunity to stress foreign dangers and the consequent need for increased defense has been overlooked. Attention was first centered upon China, but the directors of the propaganda have made the utmost use of the possibility of an American boycott, of the danger of an attack from Russia, of the condemnation of Japan by the League of Nations, of the erection of tariff walls against Japan's manufacturers by India, South Africa and other countries, and finally of the new American naval program. Each has been stressed in turn and in every case the moral drawn for Japanese consumption has been the same —increased defenses, more money for the army and navy.

But the Japanese populace is not so completely regimented as to be entirely devoid of rebels. Consequently the army, in addition to maintaining one of the strictest censorships in the world, is devoting more and more attention to the problem of "dangerous thoughts." Those who offer even the most moderate criticism of the existing regime are violently suppressed. Professors and students in the universities, teachers and even pupils in the lower schools, are arrested, tortured and imprisoned indefinitely without trial on the mere suspicion of "communism." Communism is the saving word. It covers any and every deviation from the established order.

How can Japan afford this expenditure on military and naval equipment in the midst of a world-wide depression? The answer is that Japan cannot afford it. The financial situation briefly is as follows: Japan's annual revenue amounts to approximately Yen 1,200,000,000. For the current fiscal year the expenditure will be Yen 2,200,000,000, leaving a deficit of approximately Yen 1,000,000,000. The total funded debt by the end of this year will be in the neighborhood of Yen 10,000,000,000, with interest charges of about Yen 600,000,000, or nearly half of the total annual revenue. For the year 1934-35 the army and navy alone are demanding a budget allotment of Yen 937,000,000, with the result that a deficit of about that amount will be incurred. How long can such financial methods continue? According to General Araki, this is a "mere consideration of financial technique," and perforce the Minister of Finance agrees with him. Yet it is obvious that no country can for long continue to spend almost its total annual income on its army and navy alone.

Some of the objects upon which the military authorities are spending their increased appropriations are of particular interest. During the present year 100,000 officers and men from the reserve are to be called up for special training in the use of mechanical, chemical, aerial and other modern

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methods of warfare. A chemical-warfare school is being established in Chiba Prefecture. Nine additional air squadrons are to be established and more specialized training in bombing is to be instituted. About twenty thousand additional recruits will be enrolled this year and the number of candidates for officers' commissions will be doubled. The tank equipment will be increased by 100 percent.

When a financial crisis will arrive depends upon both internal and external factors. It depends, for example, upon the ability of Japan to sell her goods abroad in spite of rising tariff barriers—and this in turn depends largely upon the continued devaluation of the yen. It depends upon the size of the rice crop. It depends upon the success with which the army propagandists can continue to frighten the people with war scares, and it depends upon the determination of China and Russia to avoid war with Japan.

Above all, the whole militaristic program depends upon the domestic farming situation in Japan. The agricultural classes are depressed, probably beyond any comparable group in the world, for they are the ultimate economic foundation of the whole structure. To support her huge army and navy Japan must inflict on her farmers an average income of Yen 120 a year. Her rapidly growing population crowds the farmed lands tighter and tighter merely to wrest a bare living from the same acres for an ever growing number of people. Ostensibly the government is committed to a policy of land extension, irrigation, fertilizer subsidies, to any and every means of increasing the number of arable acres and the yield per acre. But actually, with the terrific military pressure on the budget, new projects are deferred from year to year and appropriations for existing works are cut down. From the crowded, poverty-stricken industrial cities and from the starving farms the pressure of political opposition rises constantly higher.

A New Threat to Neutrality

AGAIN Mr. Norman Davis appears to have committed the United States to a highly dangerous proposal, presumably with the approval and advance knowledge of the State Department. According to the press, he offers to have the United States embargo the shipment of all goods to any violator of the proposed arms pact, which is now to be worked out in Europe as a substitute for Part 5 of the Treaty of Versailles. Some of the New York papers, anxious to promote the Davis commitment, are seeking to console the public by emphasizing the fact that the United States will retain its independent judgment in determining what would constitute a real violation of the pact. But no one should be deceived on the real meaning of what is proposed. The result would be that the United States would in all human probability enter the next European war against the nation or nations whom Great Britain and France pronounce to be their enemy. That enemy would automatically be the "violator of the arms pact." By agreeing to take sides against that enemy by an embargo, American neutrality would be violated and we would enter the war.

This is the same old scheme that Messrs. Stimson and Norman Davis and the misguided advocates of the League of Nations have for years been seeking to impose upon the United States. Only the words in the scheme are changed. In place of the Treaty of Versailles, the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Kellogg Pact, it is the proposed arms pact that is to be enforced. Instead of the "aggressor," who was to be strangled by the aid of the United States, we have the "violator of the arms pact." The plan is infinitely worse than last year's unilateral arms embargo, proposed by the administration but promptly denatured by the Senate with an amendment that required the embargo to be laid against all belligerents. This at least would have prevented the United States from being subtly forced into taking sides by boycotting one group of enemies and not the other.

The assumption that under the new arms-pact arrangement the United States would retain its independence of judgment is a delusion. The French and British governments would find no serious obstacle to their own course of action in any situation. Their propaganda machinery is too well oiled for them to be worried by the fear that the United States would disagree with them on any decision. And if, perchance, the United States should disagree, we should simply invite trouble with them, for they would be certain to excoriate America throughout the world for our "refusal to appreciate the moral issue." The plan of Norman Davis is on a par in its unwisdom with his proposal along the same lines at Geneva last May, except that then the condition of the American embargo was a unanimous decision of all the nations in the League about who was the "aggressor." Now, presumably, Britain and France will be the real judges. Such proposals have an innocuous sound, but the price paid for them would be high.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

PUBLISHED WEEKLY AND COPYRIGHT, 1934, IN THE U. S., BY THE NEW REPUBLIC, INC., 421 WEST 21ST STREET, NEW YORK CITY. BRUCE BLIVEN, PRESIDENT. DANIEL MEBANE, TREASURER.

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Ivory Towers to Let

WHAT WERE the political opinions of the average writer during the years from 1924 till 1930? If asked, he would laugh and say that he hadn't any, that he detested politics and people who talked about it—probably he could best be described as (smiling) an anarchist; he believed in liberty. Yes, the only political issues that excited him in the least were those affecting the liberty of the individual to do just as he pleased. On principle he would fight to the death against prohibition, censorship, blue laws and all that sort of thing—and won't you let me pour you another drink?

But notwithstanding his parade of indifference, the writer of those days had a political philosophy which, though ingenuous, was fairly complete. He believed that all of men's physical needs—and perhaps more needs than they then possessed—could be satisfied within the limits of the existing system. There was no need economically for drastic changes. Year by year things were getting a little better, year by year people were working shorter hours and were being paid higher wages; they could buy more automobiles and ready-to-wear clothes and mechanical refrigerators. It was probably true that some sections of the country hadn't shared in prosperity—there were the West Virginia miners, the cotton-mill strikers in Gastonia and Marion, but these were far away and their troubles were mentioned only in the back pages of the newspapers. It was also true that injustice often prevailed—Tom Mooney was still in prison and there was the memory of the Sacco-Vanzetti case which had stirred the intellectual public, but accidents like these were exceptional and might be prevented in the future by education, without changing the structure of society. Besides, there was no hope of changing things much, even if one so desired. The world would continue on its automatic path; the best one could do was to vote, quadrennially, for the somewhat more honest or picturesque candidate—La Follette in 1924, Al Smith in 1928—while realizing in advance that he was certain to lose.

Four or five years later, the man who held these opinions might be marching with strikers in a picket line. He might be discussing proletarian literature, writing poems about the Scottsboro boys, attending conventions of the unemployed—or, having chosen the other side, he might be uttering polemics against Communism under the guise of book reviews. All the ivory towers were vacant now and for rent at reduced rates on long-term leases. There was no longer any question that writers were politically minded. And the radicals among them, probably more numerous than the conservatives, were undoubtedly more conspicuous.

Here was a development that the conservative critics found it hard to understand. Either they explained the movement toward the left as a popular aberration, a fashion that writers followed for fear of being left behind, or else they talked about writers "getting religion" and fanatically accepting "the Gospel according to St. Marx." It must be granted that in both these jeers there is an element of truth, yet they cast no light at all on the real question. Fashions are never wholly meaningless: why should this one have prevailed among hundreds of others? Doctrines held with religious fervor are usually the answers to doubts and gropings: why should writers have felt an all-consuming need for affirmations?

The Marxian critics explained that the radicalization of writers and other intellectual workers was caused by the depression. After 1929 no sensitive person, they said, could help seeing and being affected by the misery about him. Writers are professionally sensitive—if not to their neighbors' sorrows, then at least to their own. They suffered as much as other classes; their incomes were cut in half by the reduced demand for their wares; and the future seemed even more insecure than the present. They were therefore compelled to reconsider their position in society. . . . This is, in reality, the principal reason for the new attitude of writers as a class, though it may not apply to writers as individuals. Their beliefs were not always determined by their economic situation—some of them mildly prospered during the depression without remaining conservative, and others defended the capitalist system while starving. Moreover, this principal explanation is not the only or the inevitable one. The great depressions of the past failed to produce the same effects: there was no political movement among writers in the 1870's, and even though the whole country suffered for years from the panic of 1893, it left hardly a trace in American literature. Why were the literary results of the new panic so rapid and so nearly universal?

I shall not try to explain all the causes of this phenomenon, many of which are related to international events and to the enthusiasm aroused by the Five Year Plan. Yet there is a sense in which the whole movement toward political action grows out of the lives led by American writers before 1929 and is the logical sequel to the opinions they held during the boom years, when they claimed to be wholly indifferent to politics.

In those days most writers believed, I said, that men's physical needs could be satisfied within the existing framework of society. But this did not make them supporters of the established order. On the

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contrary, they liked to regard themselves as rebels against it, even though narrow limits were fixed to their rebellion. They were aggressively uninterested in the social reforms that had occupied their predecessors, Wells, Shaw, the American muckrakers, the Fabian socialists. There was no longer any great need, they said, for protecting society from the attacks of rapacious individuals. The situation had been turned end for end, so that the very existence of the individual seemed to be threatened by the increasing power of society: this had become the central problem of a new era. Although the existing system could satisfy men's physical needs, they believed that it could never satisfy the needs of the individual spirit.

Their revolt against modern society assumed fantastic and often silly shapes, it became the excuse for a good deal of self-dramatization, heroic vice and drunken despair, yet the emotion beneath it was honest and straightforward. Writers and artists, all the intellectual classes, suffered under a feeling of real discomfort. Something oppressed them, some force was preventing them from doing their best work. They did not understand its nature, but they tried to exorcise it by giving it names—it was the stupidity of the crowd, it was hurry and waste, it was the falseness of polite conventions, it was Mass Production, Babbittry, our Business Civilization—perhaps it was the Machine, which had been developed to satisfy men's needs, but which was now controlling those needs and forcing its standardized products upon us by means of omnipresent advertising and omnipresent vulgarity—the Voice of the Machine, the Tyranny of the Mob. The same social mechanism that fed and clothed the body was starving the emotions, was closing every path toward creativeness and self-expression.

There was no political theory that promised a haven to the individual spirit. All the moderate reformers had been discredited by the War and the Treaty of Versailles; all the radicals seemed impractical and silly. Guild Socialists, Anarchists and Syndicalists belonged to a forgotten age of innocent aspirations. The Communists were shrill, futile voices crying that we should imitate Russia—and to what purpose? If the Russian experiment succeeded, it would merely combine the mechanical efficiency of the West with a terrifying system of mob control; it would lead toward a Utopia of identical human ants, a dullard's paradise, and the liberty of the individual would be doubly crushed—even the aspiration toward liberty would die within him. Russia was like America; they were two formidable giants marching against the old European culture to which writers clung; and Europe was weakening before their onslaughts.

It seemed in those days that nobody could hasten or direct the heavy march of history or hope for any political solution of his problems; the individual would have to solve them for himself. He could either adjust himself to society by yielding to its standards, or else, if he was too proud to accept this course, he could escape society by seeking new places, new ideals, new ways of living. He could either surrender or else assert his independence by running away.

There is a certain danger in using the word "escape." It has begun to carry with it an overtone of moral disapproval; it suggests evasion and cowardice and flight from something that ought to be faced. Yet there is no real shame in retreating from an intolerable situation or in fleeing from an enemy that seems too powerful to attack. Many writers regarded society as an enemy of this sort; their only hope lay in finding a refuge from it. During the last years before the depression it seemed that the literary world was dominated by a single compelling emotion, by the desire to escape from the hypocrisies and constraints of American civilization.

Most of its manifestations could be grouped into three general categories. There was first of all the *escape into art,* a tendency that I discussed some weeks ago in my articles on the Religion of Art. Then, in the second place, there was the *escape toward the primitive.* People felt vaguely that the most oppressive feature of modern civilization was its binding and falsifying of natural instincts. Life in the cities was artificial, unreal, and man would be happier by somehow throwing off its burdens. But the commonest form of escape adopted during those years was the *escape by sea,* by simply packing one's bags and announcing that one was going to the South of France to write—"and don't expect me home for Christmas, not this year or next, because I'm leaving this damn town forever."

Ever since 1920, there had been no break in the movement toward France. Artists and writers, art photographers, dancers, pansies, movie actors, Guggenheim fellows, divorcées dabbling in sculpture, unhappy ex-debutantes wondering whether a literary career wouldn't take the place of marriage —a whole world of people with and without talent but sharing the same ideals had happily deserted the homeland. Each year some of them returned while others crowded into their places: the migration continued at a swifter rate. But toward the middle of the decade, the motives behind it underwent an imperceptible but real change in emphasis. The earlier exiles had been driven abroad by a hatred of American dullness and puritanism, yet primarily they had traveled *in search of* something—leisure, freedom, knowledge, some quality that was offered by an older culture. Their successors felt these same desires, but felt them a little less strongly. Instead of being drawn ahead, they were propelled from behind, pushed eastward by the need for *getting away from* something. They were not so much exiles as refugees.

They began to scatter over the earth like fragments of an eruption. "Americans," says F. Scott Fitzgerald, "were wandering ever more widely—friends seemed eternally bound for Russia, Persia,

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Abyssinia and Central Africa. And by 1928, Paris had grown suffocating. With each new shipment of Americans spewed up by the boom the quality fell off, until toward the end there was something sinister about the crazy boatloads. They were no longer the simple pa and ma and son and daughter, infinitely superior in their qualities of kindness and curiosity to the corresponding class in Europe, but fantastic neanderthals who believed something, something vague, that you remembered from a very cheap novel. . . . There were citizens traveling in luxury in 1928 and 1929 who, in the distortion of their new condition, had the human value of the Pekinese, bivalves, cretins, goats."

But these weren't the people that made Paris seem suffocating to the refugees of art. Creatures like this were easy to avoid; one had merely to keep away from the big hotels and the nightclubs in Montmartre. The refugees were also trying to escape something more subtle, some quality of American civilization that they carried within themselves. Wherever half a dozen of them gathered together, this quality reappeared and the same experience was reënacted. There was a first glow of enthusiasm; friends were told about this marvelous untouched place and came hastening to enjoy it—"Whatever happened seemed to have something to do with art." Then, as the colony grew, there were jealousies, boredom, gossip, intrigues; some Americans became landlords and quarreled with their American tenants—but by this time there were Germans, too, and a broken-down English viscount and a handful of Russian émigrés, while the natives were grasping the opportunity of exploiting all these visitors by raising prices and installing a jazz band in the principal café. Artists began to complain that it was impossible to work here any longer with all these interruptions; writers again felt that something was constraining them, interfering with their thoughts—and the colony began to dissolve, a good half of it moving onward in search of a place that was still unspoiled by themselves.

All over the Mediterranean lands, but especially on the Riviera and in the Balearic Islands, colonies of this sort sprang up and flourished and eventually sent forth out-wanderers in search of a deeper solitude. It was only natural that the more energetic pilgrims should eventually reach the goal they had been pursuing. Some morning, inevitably, they woke and found themselves in a town that was virgin of tourists. It might be in the western isles of Greece; it might be at Lebda on the Tripolitanian coast, or in Dalmatia, or perhaps on the northern edge of the great desert, at Biskra in an off-season—at any rate they had finally escaped from all the things they hated. They sat in the one café looking out across the sun-hallucinated square and saw walls and crazy houses that must have been standing in the Middle Ages, with nowhere a sign of new construction, nowhere a Woolworth Building or a Chrysler Tower. There were no machines, not even a coffee mill or a Ford roadster; there was no false shame about the functions of the body. Here at last one was free to live and write in one's own fashion. Here one could lie abed all day and work through the night—or, if one chose, get roaring drunk, smoke hashish, indulge in any sort of orgy without fearing the police or even public censure. Here again one could write without thought of editorial deadlines or critics asking what it meant; one could write exactly as one pleased. . . . But the days passed by and the great novel or poem was not even started.

The refugees were undergoing a peculiar experience. In Paris or the South of France they had written stories about their childhood, about Michigan or Nebraska, stories the hero of which was a sensitive boy oppressed by his surroundings. Later, when this feeling of oppression faded in their minds, they had begun to write about their new friends in Europe, but without the same enthusiasm; they were easily interrupted. Here in this ultimate refuge there were no distractions whatever, nothing to keep them from working except the terrifying discovery that they had nothing now to say. Boredom and loneliness set in. They began to find that the food was bad, that there were fleas in the hotel, a dozen minor discomforts—and suddenly one morning they packed their bags and started north toward Paris, where for all the tourists like fantastic neanderthals, still there were people who spoke your own language. Perhaps they even felt homesick for America, but unless they had run out of money there seemed to be no special reason for returning. New York, in the effort to overcome its native vices, had adopted those of Paris. Everywhere in the world of the arts, which had now allied itself with the world of cosmopolitan wealth, there existed the same atmosphere of frustration and purposeless tension; the laughter was keyed too high on both sides of the Atlantic.

There was no escape. Whatever the path they followed and the principle they chose to guide them—whether they drank gin cocktails in Manhattan, or retired into Connecticut to be close to the soil, or wandered from island to island in the Pacific, or tried to disregard their surroundings and live only in the bitter air of masterpieces—it did not matter; the refugees of art always ended by reaching the same goal; they ended in an atmosphere of hysteria and bewilderment that was not unlike the atmosphere of the bourgeois society they were trying to evade.

All the emotional and intellectual foundation for what would follow was laid in the boom years. Thus, even under Harding and Coolidge, the theory of individualism was already in full flight. Notwithstanding the universal praise it received from essayists and business apologists, it had ceased to flourish at the heart of the social system—the very millionaires were colorless indoor people who tried to live up to the conception of themselves created by their press agents, and who, in their private lives,

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were ruled by the standards of the public they exploited. Individualism had deserted the forum, the marketplace, and was taking refuge in marginal doctrines, in the past, in exile or in dreams. And it found no safety there: on the contrary, it was being forced to acknowledge its defeat. The individualistic way of life was even failing to produce individuals. In their flight from social uniformity, artists were likely to choose uniform paths of escape and obey the conventions of their own small groups; even their abnormalities of conduct belonged to fixed types; even in the neuroses from which more and more of them suffered they followed established patterns.

About this time there began to be gestures toward a reconciliation with society. Thornton Wilder wrote a Christian novel, which became enormously successful—Hemingway joined the Catholic Church—the Harvard and Princeton Humanists began to be taken more seriously—dozens of young men followed T. S. Eliot's example and called themselves royalists, Catholics and classicists—the Tennessee Agrarians issued manifestoes calling for a return to the sort of rural life that had been lived in the South before the Civil War. All of these acts and doctrines might be regarded as forms of escape, but not in the sense in which I have been using the word in the preceding pages. All of them were directed toward an escape from the present into a more desirable past—as represented by Greece, the Middle Ages or the Cotton Kingdom—but they did not suggest that we should merely evade the social responsibilities of our time. On the contrary, the adherents of these movements were eager to assume political obligations. In order to work for a restoration of past conditions, they were ready to ally themselves with certain representatives of the present order. Some of their projects—and the natural hostility toward them on the part of most young writers—were clarified during the otherwise absurd and fruitless debate about Humanism, which started almost at the moment of the Wall Street crash.

Long before the results of the crash were reflected in unemployment figures and graphs of business inactivity, there was in the air a disturbing whisper of change. Seward Collins, then a Humanist and the editor of The Bookman, wrote a vindictive "Farewell to the Twenties." Reading it, one had for the first time a feeling of having belonged to a literary period that might have been mistaken in its general aims. This feeling was reinforced by other events. Two or three writers committed suicide for reasons that were artistic rather than financial. It was as if they had wished to write in their own blood that an era was ending, and their deaths were so interpreted.

Long before the international crisis of 1931, writers were convinced that they had been wrong in one of their original assumptions. It was true enough that the present system could not provide for the needs of the spirit—but it could not even provide for men's physical needs, could not feed and clothe them. This was a new element in their picture of the world. For the rest, however, the depression merely hastened a process of readjustment that had begun already. The refugees from America often thought vaguely of coming home; now the depression was forcing them home by cutting off their incomes. They had wondered whether it might not be best to ally themselves with society; now they were compelled to make this alliance for the sake of self-preservation; they were compelled to recognize the importance to themselves of all the things they had believed to be futile.

But at this point they made another discovery. They found that society was not a dull abstraction, a gray fog in which they could lose themselves or from which they could run away—it was real, tangible and full of contradictions that were daily becoming more self-evident. Here were wages cut and dividends increased; here were speculators fattening on the general misery; here were breadlines in Times Square, in the midst of skysigns advertising all the luxuries they couldn't buy; here were overproduction and underconsumption, machines standing idle and men waiting in the snow without overcoats, men hungry while wheat was being burned on the prairies, fruit rotting unpicked, milk dumped into gutters—and here were social classes in conflict, sinking, rising, struggling to hold power or merely fighting for enough to eat.

If one seeks for an explanation of the new political climate that followed the depression, there is no use invoking the missionary zeal of the Comintern or the bones of Karl Marx. There is a homelier reason for it. Once a writer had recognized that society contained hostile classes, that the result of their conflict was uncertain and would affect his own fortunes, then he ceased to believe that political action was silly: he became "politicalized." If he also decided that the class whose interests lay closest to his own was the working class, that the home he was seeking lay with them, he became a radical. When the change took place, it was almost as simple as that.

MALCOLM COWLEY.

American Jeremiad

It's pretty hard to sing of moonlight now,
Of benches in the park and lovers' lanes.
I'd like to if I could, but here somehow
Are shadows, beggars, shadows, and the rain's
A dripping, soppy, clammy winding-sheet
Indifferent to the tragedies of men,
Indifferent as the many passing feet
That make the beggars rise and drop again.

What shall a lover sing when half the land
Is driven cold and lives on dank despair?
As long as inhumanity's in the hand
That runs the race and whips the poor apart,
Lovers must all embrace a bloody air
And strangle men who starve the human heart.

ALFRED KREYMBORG.

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"Crazy Like a Fox"

Pelley of the Silver Shirts

WILLIAM DUDLEY PELLEY is "Chief" of the Silver Shirts of America, rip-roaring rough-riders of the magazine Liberation and intrepid antagonists of the "Judean swarm" and "communistic adversary." The Silver Legion last January commemorated the first anniversary of its founding. On the thirtieth of the same month, Adolf Hitler commemorated the first anniversary of his ascension to power in Germany. Here is Mr. Pelley's simple program:

> Give me a quarter-million dollars to work with, all at one time, and I'll absolutely change the thinking of America and bring back our fundamental constitutionalism in a matter of months. Somewhere in the United States, sooner or later, there is going to be a person of means who will recognize that in saying this I have engaged in no idle boast. The quarter-million is going to be provided, the revelatory literature is going out in sufficient quantities to begin the actual end of this nightmare.

The public career of this man Pelley needs closer scrutiny than has been given it thus far by those recording the antics of his fascist organization. One hears little more than that he is "a former newspaper man," "a former movie writer," "a former Y.M.C.A. secretary," "a former spiritualist." One is left with the impression that he was a petty dabbler in a number of vocations and that, having made no go of any one of them, he is now dabbling in Red-baiting. Not so at all. For more than a decade before his turn to spiritualism in 1929, Bill Pelley enjoyed an enviable reputation and commanded big money as a highly adroit diverter of working-class and middle-class thinking. Under contract with the Crowell Publishing Company from 1917 to 1929, he was an outstanding contributor of short stories and human-interest articles to The American Magazine, a fat and prosperous conveyor of greetings from big business to Main Street. Surplus products of his pen graced the pages of Collier's, Red Book, Good Housekeeping and other widely circulated advertising media. His novels, "The Greater Glory" (1919), "The Fog" (1921) and "Drag" (1924), were widely read.

Writing novels and short stories was, moreover, only a side line with Pelley. He was interested primarily in publishing. His record in that line dates back to 1909 when, as a young man of twenty-four, he founded The Philosopher Magazine in Fulton, New York. He was, at different times between 1912 and 1920, editor and publisher of The Chicopee (Massachusetts) Journal, The Wilmington (Vermont) Times, and The St. Johnsbury (Vermont) Caledonian, feature writer for The Springfield (Massachusetts) Homestead and crime reporter for The Boston Globe. Between 1924 and 1929, while engaged in writing for the movies, he established the Pelley Press, a printing and publishing plant in New York City, and Hi-Hat Magazine in Hollywood. He was president of the Pelley and Eckels Advertising Agency in Los Angeles and business manager of one of the entries in the Dole flight to Hawaii.

As a movie writer Pelley did not do so badly by himself, either. He did the scripts for the following pictures: "The Light in the Dark" (Lon Chaney), "The Shock" (Lon Chaney), "The Fog" (Cullen Landis), "Her Fatal Million" (Viola Dana), "Jerry Out o' My Way" (Bert Lytell), "Ladies to Board" (Tom Mix), "Sawdust Trail" (Hoot Gibson), "Lady Bird" (Betty Compson), "Ladies Need Help" (Colleen Moore) and other well known pictures.

According to "Who's Who," Pelley spent 1917 and 1918 in Siberia as a Y.M.C.A. secretary. In connection with his experience there, the following extract from a biography of him (appended to a reprint in booklet form of his American Magazine article, "My Seven Minutes in Eternity") is of interest:

> When America got into the War, through a combination of circumstances of extraordinary motivation, Mr. Pelley found himself in the combined role of Red Triangle Secretary with the Japanese in Siberia, consular courier, and war correspondent for The Saturday Evening Post. . . . Mr. Pelley was one of the first newspapermen to get into Soviet Russia with the Czechoslovak troops. He made his way 3,600 miles out of Siberia in the dead of winter with two civilian employees of the International Harvester Company, carrying many of Ambassador Francis' documents out to Consul-General Harris and President Wilson, along with $750,000 of the harvester company's funds representing liquidated properties in Red Moscow.

Returning to America in 1919 an "authority" on the new Russia and the Far East, Pelley, in six articles for Sunset, a magazine published in California, and in two for World Outlook, told the American public what big business wanted it to know about those places.

Now, in the light of the facts presented thus far, let us size up the "Chief" of the Silver Shirts. Obviously, Pelley is not an illiterate. It is clear, on the contrary, that, in handling the machinery of "public enlightenment," he is no tyro. Having for nearly two decades rubbed shoulders with big advertisers

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in the pages of widely circulated magazines, he has brought to his present task of teaching the goose-step to hill-billies technical equipment of formidable proportions. In that respect, he stands head and shoulders above his fascist rivals. The supposition that he may be mentally broken, that his sudden foray into spiritualism in 1929 was the result of an intellectual collapse, has, superficially, a certain measure of plausibility. But even a cursory examination of the first few numbers of The New Liberator, the "psychically-received-from-discarnate-sources" forerunner of the current Liberation, reveals a hard-headed practicality that hardly allows of such a notion.

Pelley must be regarded essentially as a high-speed, high-pressure copywriter who is devoting his talents to the job of inflaming a potential army of hooligans to be used to break strikes, club workers and otherwise serve the sponsors of reaction. The hot effusions that sizzle in the pages of Liberation are the products of cool calculation and cold cash rather than of any inner disturbance. Hard-boiled, crafty, keenly aware of the mental make-up of the people he is hoodwinking, Pelley is dangerous and needs watching.

Abundant evidence of his skill is to be seen in his career as a "spiritualist." The manner in which he crashed the racket was spectacular. The story begins with his death in 1928. Oh yes indeed, he died in 1928. One evening in May of that year, while working in the study of his cottage in Altadena, California, on a story for Collier's, Bill suddenly dropped dead. He remained dead for seven minutes. This interval he spent, naturally enough, in Eternity, where he met some nice people and chatted with them about this and that.

Pelley waited nearly a year before coming out with the story. And to whom did he tell it? To the two and a quarter million readers of American Magazine, if you please! "My Seven Minutes in Eternity" was the lead-off, play-up article of the March, 1929, issue. Prominently advertised on the cover, and prefaced by a persuasive note from the pen of editor Merle Crowell, "My Seven Minutes in Eternity" received a grand send-off. And the fan mail was terrific! Pelley says so himself and we may well believe him. This is his story:

> At first I was dubious about writing the article. It was a very deep personal experience and its nature was such that I did not care to have myself labeled a freak or a crank. But The American Magazine's editors persuaded me, and so the article was written and published. The circulation of this publication is around 2,225,000. Advertisers estimate that each copy of a given magazine is read by at least four persons. Which means that something like ten million people had access to that narrative, and because it was the first article in the magazine, most of them read it. I know because of my mail in reaction.

The article itself was simple and straightforward in tone, and had none of the formal trappings of professional spiritualism. "Call it the Hereafter, call it Heaven, call it Purgatory, call it any one of The Astral Planes, call it a Hyper-Dimension, call it What You Will. Whatever it is—and where—that human entities go after being released from physical limitations, I had gone there that night." Pelley kept harping on the fact that he was not a spiritualist or occultist or psychic researcher or anything like that, but just an ordinary individual telling about something that happened to him.

But something or someone persuaded Pelley soon after that his future really lay in spiritualism, for about a year later we find him proclaiming that his "mental radio can tune in on the minds or voices of those in another dimension of being," and that he devoted much of his time to "hyper-dimensional instruction," and that his hyper-dimensional instructors had dictated to him, among other things, "a 400-page book on Political Economy so advanced in context and knowledge that it has surprised authorities on the subject who have perused portions of it."

The first number of Pelley's New Liberator appeared in May, 1930—and it was, in a super-astral manner of speaking, a "wow." Pelley, since writing "My Seven Minutes," had evidently taken a cram course in the psychic arts. But among such stuff as "Shambhala: Strange Mutterings and Rumblings Are Heard in the East," "You Can Remember Before You Were Born!" and "Why I am Convinced the Dead Are Alive," is a psychically received message entitled "The True Significance of Present Russian Atheism," in which clairaudient voices announce that Russia and China are going to combine and that "the petty squabblings of interdependent European nations will be swiftly ignored in the mightier menace of a new influx of Goths and Huns battling at the Gates of Europe!" And there was another subliminal proclamation about a Great Foundation presently galvanizing into existence "which shall command International Peace, which shall make Herbert Hoover's war-relief work a Permanent Mercy."

Expertly printed on expensive stock and attractively illustrated, The New Liberator (its name was changed to Liberation in January, 1932) was from the start a mad hodge-podge of mystic twaddle and reactionary, chauvinistic demagogy. For example, the June, 1931, number of this organ of "spiritualism" contained the complete text of a speech delivered by Milton W. Harrison, president of the Railway Security Owners' Association, to a Houston, Texas, meeting of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen. We need quote but one sentence from the speech to indicate its nature: "We are steadily progressing toward the goal of making everybody a capitalist."

In subsequent issues the clairaudient voices of "Great Souls" on the Other Side defended the profit system, called Henry Ford the "one great industrialist in America who stands head and shoulders above his fellow captains of industry for dramatically displaying spiritual sagacity in his undertak-

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ings," demanded a navy second to none, got hot and bothered about the horrible machinations of the Communist International and otherwise indicated clear-cut class interests.

When Pelley, in January, 1933, after certain terrestrial conversations with Nazi agents, launched the Silver Shirts, he entered upon his new duties a Supernormal Adept, not only in Subliminal Knowledge but in fascist provocation as well. Also, he had an established organization to start with, the Fraternity of the Liberation, founded in April, 1931, and a money-raising agency, the Foundation for Christian Economics, established in November, 1931.

The anti-communist and anti-Jewish propaganda in the pages of the Silver Shirt weekly, Liberation, closely resembles Hitler's stuff, with liberal borrowings from the anti-Jewish material in Ford's Dearborn Independent. The organization's center of activities at the present time is Oklahoma City, where a newspaper, The Silver Legion Ranger, is published, and a quartermaster corps, selling uniforms (silver shirt with scarlet "L" on shoulder, blue corduroy trousers, leggins and tie) at $10 apiece, is functioning. "The Legion," explains Pelley, "is not in the clothing business. The quartermaster corps in Oklahoma City is primarily interested in outfitting the Silver Rangers for active service against the communistic adversary."

The December 16, 1933, number of Liberation announces the establishment of a Washington bureau, offering a condensed weekly letter service to the business man "striving to hold his own against odds which he cannot successfully identify." "This service," Pelley says, "will have little to do with Asheville, North Carolina or Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. It is another distinct branch of Silver Shirt expansion. . . . For ten months the Silver Shirt publications have been apprizing the general Gentile public of much of the skullduggery that has been going on in high places. Now . . . the business man cannot pay too high a price for accurate information as to 'what it's all about.'"

ARTHUR GRAHAM.

What's Happening in the Cotton Belt

BASIC improvement in the condition of the cotton farmer is not yet visible to the naked eye. Newspaper reports on the South that have represented it as leading the nation in recovery are misleading. The only improvement of economic conditions in the Cotton Belt has been the artificial business flurry created by the streams of government money that it has received.

In the summer of 1933 cotton farmers plowed up ten million acres of growing cotton. For this the government paid them, but since it failed to push the price of cotton above ten cents, the government then arranged to loan them ten cents on their cotton. Through the summer and fall of 1933 R.F.C. work and direct relief were administered. By December the C.W.A. program began to function. To tenants and other unemployed the C.W.A. was a life-saving device. It was literally new blood, not only to individuals but to whole communities. Along with it, direct relief continued to be administered both in money and in goods. Flour, butter, eggs, cheese, pork and oranges have fed people to whom these items are ordinarily luxuries. On a smaller scale clothing and bedding were distributed.

As the farmer begins his spring plowing for another crop he finds himself still shored up by his government. He has rented part of his cotton acreage to his Uncle Sam. He can resort to a seed loan or a crop-production loan to finance his crop. Perhaps a nearby P.W.A. project offers him or some member of his family the possibility of employment. And for the future he expects, through the acreage rentals and the Bankhead Bill, a ten-million-bale crop and fifteen or twenty cents for his cotton.

The winter has been hard for all, miserable for some, but federal relief has kept it from being intolerable. The system, however, is unchanged. Remove federal relief and acreage control, and the cotton country would at once sink to primitive conditions of life and society. Control of production is the only constructive and hopeful feature in all of the vast relief program that has been administered in the Cotton Belt, but whether controlled production can withstand its own effects on foreign production is doubtful. In any case, all other forms of relief in the rural South have been, as Mr. Harry L. Hopkins says, like dumping money into a sewer.

The new plan of rehabilitation of the farmer explained by Mr. Hopkins at the Atlanta Conference of Southern relief directors in March promises more in the way of permanent relief than any previous measure. According to Mr. Hopkins, rural families on relief rolls should be provided with land, housing, farm animals, tools and groceries and so be given an opportunity to care for themselves. About 120,000 Southern families need this type of relief at once. The plan is perhaps reminiscent of Reconstruction promises of forty acres and a mule, but it does offer more hope than mere pouring of relief into empty stomachs.

The South has had its share of R.F.C. and C.W.A. money. The unemployed and the needy have sweated for it and received it. It has kept

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them alive. Its administration has been the source of constant wrangling and an undisguised selfishness that has been little short of class warfare. Whose tenants should receive relief work and whose be excluded? Such questions have brought into play local influences of every kind from politics to religion. The principal controversy centered about the wage scale. In the early days of R.F.C. work the rate was one dollar a day in the cities and often as low as fifty cents for a day of eight hours in the small towns.

The rural sections of the Cotton Belt do not think in wage terms per hour. Not familiar with union-labor ideology and terminology, they still measure labor by the sun, though some concession has been made to the eight-hour day. The orthodox fourteen-hour day has lost ground in the past decade, even on the farms. The prevailing opinion has been that laborers on relief-work projects should not be paid more than the current wage for unskilled day labor. To pay more, it was cogently argued, would disrupt the local labor system, defy the sacred law of supply and demand, "ruin the niggers" and afford aid and comfort to the Communists. An iron-clad, copper-riveted argument it was, and drew scant dissent from anyone. Even the unemployed rarely protested. The bony hand of hunger had them by the throat and they were grateful for crumbs.

Crumbs were what they got. Rural communities as a rule paid their relief workers fifty cents for a day of eight hours, with one to three days' work allotted a week, until August, 1933, when a new regulation required that labor be paid thirty cents an hour on a five-hour day. The response was immediate and violent. North Carolina officials considered abolishing relief work entirely and dispensing the funds directly as a dole. In the lower South, where the Negro population is dense, many leading citizens recommended that relief funds be rejected rather than pay laborers $1.50 for five hours of work while local rates still remained at fifty cents for ten hours. It would be better, they said, for some Negroes to starve than to upset all of them with this high wage. The Negroes must not be ruined. It is not reported, however, that any community turned down the relief money. Relief workers who knew the desperate need fought for the funds, and merchants whose places of business absorbed the money were not anxious to lose the trade. With the advent of the C.W.A., wages were boosted again.

It cannot be denied that relief work and relief wages have to some extent upset the Cotton Belt laborer, both white and Negro. They have given him a childlike confidence that the government will not let him starve. In some cases it has led him to drop other possible means of livelihood. But the typical white and Negro tenants are uneducated and underprivileged persons and it is not to be wondered at that some of them have been "ruined," as the village bourgeoisie is convinced is the case.

But on the other hand relief has indeed "ruined" the landlord. Selfish landlords, often hard pressed themselves, have used local political influence to get work for their tenants. Many landlords in the South made their 1933 crop with labor that was openly fed by the government. Where that was the case the tenant should have received a larger cash return from the crop, since no advances for food had to be deducted from his half. But there are neat ways of getting around this.

The work part of relief, however, has ruined neither the tenant nor the landlord. Instead, it has been a meager salvation for both. And it has done something to the Cotton Belt. It has given it some new ideas. It has been a liberalizing influence. It has made the peasantry conscious of some of its rights, and the middle class aware of, and grudgingly sympathetic with, the ideal of a better economic order than our decaying capitalism.

At present the price of cotton is about twelve cents, double its price of the past few years. Even so, the Cotton Belt is still in a bad way. Landlords are burdened with the accumulated debts of years. Some of them are facing foreclosure and others owe so much that creditors cannot afford to foreclose. Ten and twelve-cent cotton has enabled most of them to ease the debt burden, but not to liquidate it. There is no present indication that in the cases of many farmers it will ever be liquidated.

Tenants are as ragged and destitute as they have ever been in the history of the South. The 1933 crop was made on starvation terms by hungry people. The writer has lived in cotton sections of the South all of his life and has never seen poverty so desperate among tenant farmers, white and Negro, as during the past twelve months. Homes without a match or a cake of soap, men too weak from hunger to work, naked children, people taking their meals from blackberry bushes and plum thickets, tattered cotton rags for winter clothing, these are details that have the ring of melodrama, but unfortunately they have been realistic facts on a wide scale on Southern farms the past year.

Tenants are suffering an added injustice in the acreage-reduction program. While one clause of the contract the landowner signs in pledging to reduce his cotton acreage stipulates that he retain the same number of tenants on his land, there are ways of evading the intent of the clause. Raising less cotton than formerly, the landlord does not need so many tenants. He may keep the same number, but only advance rations and supplies to those tenants whom he instructs to raise cotton, leaving the others to shift for themselves. This is a plain violation of the intent of the contract, but landlords are planning to violate it in this way.

The N.R.A. program has thus far meant exactly nothing to the rural and small-town South except to raise commodity prices. In the long run, if successful, it should bring the farmer higher prices for his products, but, so far, any gain in this

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direction has been overbalanced by higher prices of the things he buys. In non-industrial cotton communities—where stores and other forms of small business are as often as not family enterprises, where capital is small and one clerk the rule, and to stay in business at all a struggle—it has been practically impossible to employ more men, and often impossible to increase wages. The small towns make almost no pretense of living up to the codes.

But the South is for Mr. Roosevelt and all of his works. The masses of its people believe in him and are willing to follow him in anything, from the repeal of prohibition to imprisoning Wall Street bankers, if that could be done.

Agricultural conditions in the South are as miserable as in the Middle West, but there have been no farm riots in the South save for one outbreak among Negro share croppers in Tallapoosa County, Alabama. The reasons for this silent misery are fairly evident. Southern people are probably more conservative than those of any other section of the country. They believe in the status quo and wish to maintain it, though they are beginning to raise some questions. There have not yet been many foreclosures among whites except in Mississippi. Finally, the racial division in the South is antagonistic to the cohesion and coöperation of whites and Negroes of the same economic levels. If upheaval ever comes, it is likely to follow racial lines in the rural lower South, all classes of Negroes against all classes of whites.

Meanwhile the story of the cotton country continues to be the annals of the poor.

RENWICK C. KENNEDY.

Camden, Ala.

The Artistic Future of Poetry

WE CAN best understand the future by regarding the problems of the present, and by seeing in what way they are most likely to be solved.

The problem of the artist today is very much that of the artist a hundred and twenty years ago. Such traditions as exist in social life seem only to be survivals, the moral life of the peoples is disordered, and there is a feeling of revolution in the world, yet the direction in which the revolution will lead us is not apparent. Today the lack of faith, even in revolutions, is more striking than it was before. At such a time it is particularly clear that the academic schools of poetry, and indeed of all art, are dead, and the poet is driven to reëxamine his position and to endeavor to return to fundamentals.

That poetry is vitally important is clear. To talk of poetry itself being dead is the same as to talk of language being dead. Poetry is a function of language, recording, vivifying, correcting word and idiom, like a purification of the blood-stream of nations. As long as people are talking, exchanging new words and evolving a new idiom, poetry is an essential activity of life. If this function is not performed, language, literature and hence, ultimately, humanity, suffer.

As examples of literature suffering, take, in the last fifty years, Shaw, Wells and Bennett—all writers who suffered from the lack of a background of living contemporary poetry. Their interpretations are not purified by the living presence of a poetic understanding of the same kind of life as they were describing. One feels always the lack of a poetry that was large enough to enclose the life of the towns, of factories; and the progress of science. Hence there is a certain philistinism in all their work. The moment they begin to discuss beauty, we feel their secret annoyance that it is not "useful" enough, we feel also the insincerity of their often quite contemptuous tributes to art, and we skip their sentimental purple passages.

Hence also, the poetic novel has been evolved as an endeavor on the part of novelists to perform a task that poets either are not able to perform or have neglected. D. H. Lawrence was a writer who essentially was a poet and who might have written great poetry from the material in his novels. Virginia Woolf's novel "The Waves" is in great part scarcely distinguishable from free verse. "Ulysses" is a gigantic example of an abortive epic. In all these works we feel the raw material of poetry; and the solution—the poetic novel—is never satisfactory; there is often energy and great inspiration, but the final concentration of poetry is absent. Even the first and greatest poetic novel, "Wuthering Heights," is not entirely satisfying: it takes other forms in our minds and we find ourselves interpreting it as poetry or poetic drama.

The error of poetry was surely the romantic movement. I am not denying the genius of that movement: indeed the very greatness of the genius of Keats was the misfortune of poetry because it twisted poetry violently into the romantic channel. If Blake had not been so unique a figure, if he had been a greater poet and perhaps less of a genius, he might have been the leader of a reaction from the late eighteenth century, which would have been as constructive as the eighteenth century, and which would have been a "criticism of life"—that is, of the Industrial Revolution.

> But most through midnight streets I hear
> How the youthful harlot's curse
> Blasts the new-born infant's tear,
> And blights with plagues the marriage-hearse,

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is poetry that is a function of life, as distinct from poetry that is an escape into dreams.

The task of the poet of the future is to win back the ground that has been lost by the romantic movement: that is to say he has to apply himself minutely to observe the life of people round him, and he has also to understand and to feel in himself the development of recent history. Poetry is at once a description of the conditions of living and an affirmation of the permanent in life, of real values. The real values are the poet's intuition, and the final test of his integrity is whether or not time recognizes the justice of that intuition.

I do not mean that poets must write exclusively, or even of necessity at all, of machinery and towns. It still remains true that if a man was dropped at random on to the earth from an airplane, there are ninety-nine chances out of a hundred that he would fall into the sea or on a patch of uninhabited land. What is required of the poet is not up-to-dateness but an awareness of the extent to which the external conditions of today; towns, machinery, etc., have, like an acid, eaten into conscious and subconscious humanity. For instance, in my image of the man being dropped on to the earth, I quite naturally thought of him as being dropped from an airplane, though I also thought of the earth as being, relatively speaking, almost unaffected by industrialism.

In Cocteau's play "Orphee" the imagery for Death is the surgeon's rubber gloves, the white coats of his assistants, and surgical instruments. In using such imagery Cocteau puts forth a claim that today it is the atmosphere of the operating theatre, the smell of anesthetic rather than the skeleton and the coffin that suggest death to us. It is implied therefore that this imagery is *real;* that it is as much part of racial consciousness, as the old imagery of skull and bones which still stirs us, not because it is present to us, but only because it is part of our racial memory.

The poet's problem is to discover the reality which is not the reality of men's inventions: but a reality of which these inventions are only projections and symbols. Invention is, as it were, only a fantasy and distraction of his mind, a so-called "reality" which man has invented: the poet's problem is to discover how far the symbols of this fabricated world are valid and correspond significantly to the realities of the subconscious mind. When scientists are inclined to sneer at poetry they should learn rather that poetry has as high claims as any branch of knowledge: it reveals reality.

All this is only a way of saying that the poetry of the future requires two or three major poets: today that seems an extravagant demand, but our past history shows that formerly it was not so. We need, for example, a poet who might write a poem comparable in its way to Joyce's "Ulysses," and an optimistic, useful-minded poet like Browning on the scale of a Wells and a Shaw, and a poet whose vision of nature is as intense as that of D. H. Lawrence. The very mention of these names is sufficient to show that there is no poet living today to compare with them. I do not mean that the work of poets should in any way resemble that of these writers, but that their poetry should cover as wide areas of experience.

The poetry of the future will start (or perhaps it has already started) from the position of Eliot and his poem "The Waste Land." That is best described in his own words:

> *Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie*
> These fragments I have shored against my ruins.

Eliot "shores up" fragments in a Waste Land the atmosphere of which is remarkably like that of late Elizabethan Drama—of Webster and Tourneur. He is the first English poet to realize the catastrophic nature of the world in which we live today: a world of tyranny, murder (often of mass murder), espionage and corrupt political systems. He realizes fully the catastrophe and he sees religion as his own way out, but in his recent religious poetry, although there is an authentic note of release for Eliot, there is no synthesis that transforms and includes the Waste Land or the people in it. The poet himself, and he only, has found a chapel among the ruins. It is nevertheless Eliot who broke away from the decaying tradition of post-Victorian or Georgian poetry.

The poetry of the future will be traditional in the sense that Eliot's poetry is traditional. That is to say it will not ape the style of poems immediately preceding it, but it will return to and learn from poetry written in an altogether older tradition. There is nothing new in this, for practically all new schools of poetry have been founded on an older tradition: Keats went to Spenser, Milton, and then Shakespeare: Wordsworth to the ballads: and there are many other examples. The tradition most suitable to our times seems to be either that of the late Elizabethans, from Webster to Donne, because the political and moral atmosphere of that poetry is real to us; or that of Pope and Dryden, because we live in a time of scientific discovery, and these poets tried to express the advance of knowledge in poetry.

What is above all essential is a complete revision of our poetic vocabulary. Poetic diction that is derivative not only fails to convey any feeling, it also falsifies the tradition from which it is derived. Tennyson's poetry has been in large part spoilt for us by his numerous imitators, who have debased his vocabulary, so that when we read his work we are not struck by his extremely original use of words. Gerard Manley Hopkins and Wilfrid Owen and Yeats (in his last poems) all invented a use of words that is rigorously their own. Owen is perhaps the only poet the War produced: when one reads his poems one feels that the many voices that have spoken about the War are silent, and that he is someone who speaks a language that communicates instantly, and that makes one know a suffering that one has never experienced.

Unfortunately, Owen was killed. The poet of the future is faced more and more urgently with

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the problem that his few war poems solve. That is to understand and to communicate the complexities of a world that grows daily more complicated. Poetry is the only branch of knowledge that can form a synthesis of our experiences, so overwhelming, so obscure and paralyzing; and if that synthesis is made, man will at least still be able to understand the soul of man. STEPHEN SPENDER.

Washington Notes

"Unwittingly and Inevitably"—Tender Plants of Profit—Myron and Charlie and Elsie Dinsmore—Harold the Hard-Boiled

THE SWING of the administration away from Big Business toward a more sympathetic attitude to organized labor, which seemed to have occurred as a result of the concentrated criticism of the N.R.A. codes, policies and performance, appears to have sustained a check. A month or so ago, the disposition among the more authoritative New Deal operators was to acknowledge that the N.R.A.—unwittingly, and anyway inevitably—had given Big Business undue advantages at the expense of the small business man, the consumer and labor. Now, however, the time had arrived to revamp the codes, change the direction of the policy and obtain a better distribution for labor and the little fellow. The apparent inclination of the administration to support the Wagner Industrial Disputes Bill seemed significant of the White House attitude. Senator Robert Wagner is concededly close to Mr. Roosevelt, has been one of his chief senatorial allies and has his confidence to a degree not surpassed by any other member of the Senate. It was believed that Mr. Wagner had talked with the President about his bill and that he would not have introduced it had he not been assured of White House approval.

The automobile labor settlement, however, seemed to change the whole picture, and there is no concealing the disappointment among the labor leaders over Mr. Roosevelt's stand on that peace agreement. In it, they hold, he not only opened the way for the company unions to get their foot definitely in the door, but laid down a principle that clashes with the Wagner Bill. Above all, the selection of Dr. Leo Wolman as the "neutral" chairman of the Automobile-Labor Arbitration Board was not pleasing to the A.F. of L. leaders. They think Dr. Wolman is unfriendly to the closed shop and are convinced in advance that the decisions of the board will not cure the fundamental trouble between the employers and the men. It seems to me a tribute to Dr. Wolman that he is apparently disliked equally by both sides in this controversy.

The prospect that the Wagner Bill will be modified so as to harmonize more nearly with the President's most recent declaration on the subject of unions has completed the discouragement of the A.F. of L. representatives. They protest that if it is amended labor will have no further interest in it.

The gist of all this confusion, from the labor angle, is that the administration has again weakened and allowed industry to frighten it away from a definite and clear-cut policy. The strongest organized fight against the Wagner Bill in its original form has been waged from the start, and manufacturers big and little have been flooded with literature pointing out the alleged devastating effects it would have upon business. Industry, as is always the case, achieved almost complete solidarity on this issue and managed to impress Washington with the idea that any step toward the closed shop, such as is contemplated in the bill, would bring about widespread unemployment and a general shutdown—and just when there is real hope of a recovery. Various industrial leaders publicly voiced this threat and it undoubtedly has had an effect upon the political advisers of the administration. What the advisers want is to keep the support of industry without alienating labor.

Of course, from the political view that is ideal, but when the two classes are at odds on a vital issue, it is exceedingly difficult to achieve. Up to now the administration has been singularly successful in its policy of leaning first toward one and then toward the other, keeping both in line under the plea of emergency and loyalty to the nation's leader in a crisis. Eventually, however, there is bound to be a showdown. In the past year, the earnings of the great corporations have enormously increased. General Motors, for example, earned $1.72 a share on its common stock, as contrasted with a considerable deficit the years before. In face of such a fact as this, the drive of the labor organizations for a better deal under the N.R.A. is clearly to be expected. They felt that they were entitled to administration support and are certainly resentful over the lukewarm character of what they received. It is a rather discouraging situation for those who thought that the reorganization proclaimed by General Johnson was going to be on genuinely new lines, lines that would really restore the balance lost by the preponderance of industrial leaders in executive positions and by the tenderness with which their interests had been handled.

The stronger progressives in the administration are rather outspoken about their feelings and I would not be surprised to see shortly another of the periodical gestures of friendliness and concern for labor. These have been typical of the administration from the start, but the trouble about them is the speed with which they are followed by other gestures to reassure industry.

It is not encouraging to note that the Compliance Board of the N.R.A. is literally smothered under work. It has so many charges of violation of the price-fixing codes by little fellows in various parts of the country that if it were to turn them all over to the Department of Justice for prosecution, the courts would be clogged almost to the degree they used to be with violations of the unlamented Volstead Act. As a matter of fact, there has been, in the past few weeks, a great influx of lawyers here. Some of them have been added to the Department of Justice staff, but most of them have been given posts in the N.R.A., where they are to aid in the great enforcement drive that General Johnson has promised. Altogether, present conditions stir no great enthusiasm over the state of the New Deal. The only real basis for optimism lies in the undoubted improvement in business conditions, though the trouble there is that the improvement is much too publicly heralded by the Sloans, the Taylors, the Schwabs and other of our industrial opti-

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mists who have been so uniformly wrong in the past. These gentlemen have been profiting by the N.R.A.'s abolition of competition—not unnaturally, since the codes under which they operate were drawn mainly with a view to gaining their support. There is, further, the point that no one can tell to what degree the improvement is artificially stimulated by federal funds. Admittedly these play a considerable part and the question is what will happen when the flood is shut off.

In this connection it is interesting to note the Treasury statement that the emergency expenditures for the year will be far below the President's estimates. This illuminating news came out immediately after the overriding of the veto of the Independent Offices Bill, and was intended to assuage the fear that national insolvency stared us in the face because of the additional $226,000,000 appropriated for veterans and federal employees. The real point is that the President finds himself unable, for one reason or another, to spend money as rapidly as he had planned.

The failure of cities and states to meet the conditions laid down by Secretary Ickes, the Public Works Administrator, is the chief reason for this slow tempo of spending. In some cases the states and cities cannot meet these conditions, but in other cases they will not. In any case, Mr. Ickes is the real paymaster of the administration. Nearly all the new Departments draw on him. Funds under his control finance the N.R.A. almost wholly and the A.A.A. partially. The amount at his disposal is a gigantic one and the efforts to get some of it are determined, persistent, resourceful and numerous almost beyond calculation. Mr. Ickes has acquired a reputation for being hard-boiled, unyielding and skeptical, and it is a reputation he deserves. In quite a number of quarters there is considerable resentment over his supposed curtness and unwillingness to "listen to reason." But to the average citizen with an appreciation of the tremendous opportunities for waste and graft in the spending of this great sum of money, those qualities in Mr. Ickes for which he is most bitterly denounced seem exactly the ones he ought to have. It is appalling to contemplate the situation we would be in if the power he has were lodged in the complacent hands of the ordinary political Cabinet member.

Washington. T. R. B.

Buildings Should Not Be Tall

Buildings should not be tall, that we be spared
The need to walk in gulches. Of their pride
We are the squalor. We the traffick-eyed,
Stench-nostriled, Klaxon-eared and thinning-haired,
Inhabiting a city's underside,
By this man-made biology prepared
To cower in meekness.—Forgetting how we fared
Who, guided for their profit, served and died.

These are our masters, basking in the sun—
It is our owners that we crawl among.
In such granitic utterance they reveal
Self-portraitures of greed that rose up, when
A grasping brood expressed in stone and steel
Its detestation of its fellow men.

KENNETH BURKE.

Other People's Money

Wall Street Can Discount on Nonsense—Johnson Settles a Point—"Deceived and Betrayed" —Raided to Failure

WELL! Well! Well! Who do you suppose is the executive secretary of the Committee for the Nation, that precious band of super-patriots organized by Dr. Wirt and then marshaled by the eminent economist and social philosopher and monetary expert, Mr. James Rand, who discovered Dr. Wirt in the act of discovering the brain trust leading us into a revolution? Who, I say, do you suppose is the executive secretary of the patriot band? Dr. Edward Aloysius Rumely. Was there not a Dr. Edward Aloysius Rumely who, during the War, bought The New York Evening Mail with money supplied by the German government, to use in propaganda for a government with which we later went to war? That Dr. Rumely was indicted and convicted and sentenced to jail for not seeing eye to eye with the patriots of that day. Can this be the same Dr. Rumely?

The dire prediction of the Stock Exchange propagandists that the passage of the stock-exchange-regulation bill would result in a drastic deflation of security prices gets something of a setback from the behavior of the stock market last month. If there is anything in Mr. Whitney's prophecies the stock market would most certainly have begun its severe deflation on the mere threat of passage of the bill. Down in Wall Street it is pretty generally believed that the bill will pass. They have been putting up a fight and hoping against hope, but have felt fairly blue about the result. Everyone knows that Wall Street always discounts events in advance. Amateurs have a way of buying shares because they hear there is to be an extra dividend. Then the extra dividend is declared and the stock goes down instead of up. The extra-dividend effect is always discounted well in advance. And so if there were to be any selling off because of the passage of a bill, that phenomenon would reveal itself, not after the bill is passed, but before.

Now during March, when all of Richard Whitney's gloomy forebodings were being distributed throughout the country and printed in all newspapers, the market was refusing to do much sinking. The total decline in the market values of all stock was four one-hundredths of one percent. Many stocks rose—amusements, chain stores, coppers, foods, mail-order houses, oils, railroad equipment, rubber. Many of those that declined a little were affected by easily understood factors—motors, for instance, which went down under the threat of the strike, though motor-equipment stocks actually rose. In the meantime, loans by banks to brokers rose all through the month. In fact they have been rising for months and the March prophecies of disaster by Whitney did not in the least interrupt that rise.

General Johnson has now decided that there can be no recovery until the capital-goods industries revive. This settles that point. It is unfortunate, however, that the General didn't reach his decision a year ago. There can

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be little doubt that his influence in the formulation of the President's policies on industrial recovery more than anything else served to delay the revival of the capital-goods industries.

However, whatever the cause, here are some sobering figures for those who believe that the capital-goods industries are the key to recovery. I keep my eye fixed on the great construction industry. The record is incredible. In the last four weeks ending March 29 (according to The Engineering News Record, whose listing of new contracts awarded is the most authentic), new contracts totaled $97,973,000. This was actually less than in the four weeks of January, when the total was $101,300,000.

Private construction is almost at a standstill. Of the March total only $32,000,000 was of the private variety. As for government contracts, they continue to make a pitiable showing. One hears of all the millions and hundreds of millions of dollars that the P.W.A. has awarded. But these somehow do not get translated into contracts or actual construction. Here is the record of contracts actually awarded since the first of the year:

January	4	$9,948,000
"	11	4,413,000
"	18	9,679,000
"	25	7,863,000
February	1	2,150,000
"	8	7,135,000
"	15	3,124,000
"	22	2,956,000
March	1	6,370,000
"	8	3,625,000
"	15	3,720,000
"	22	3,801,000
"	29	2,884,000

Who is so optimistic as to hope that such pitiful projects will take up the slack created by C.W.A. lay-offs?

Here I wish to emphasize again that I do not believe any part of the blame for this is to be laid at the door of either Secretary Ickes or Colonel Waite, who heads the P.W.A. administration. I believe the blame must rest entirely on the President of the United States. It is the fashion these last few months, when assessing blame, to pretend that someone is deceiving or betraying the President and that he is never to blame for anything. In the matter of public works the blame rests with Franklin D. Roosevelt and no one else. He has shown no real sympathy with the policy from the beginning and he has never put the slightest energy or enthusiasm behind it. Instead, he has raided the P.W.A. funds for various other projects as they succeeded each other in his favor. The result is that the whole public-works program is an utter failure.

It is silly to suppose that the meager scheme remaining can absorb any substantial part of the men who have been thrown out of work by the discontinuance of the C.W.A. According to The Federal Reserve Bulletin just issued, factory employment showed an increase of 375,000 during February with an offsetting decline of about 25,000 in non-factory work, making a total gain of 350,000. Meantime, according to The Bulletin, the C.W.A. laid off 1,100,000 men between the middle of January and the last week in February.

For those who are looking forward eagerly to the moment when industry will actually take hold and begin to expand without respect to government infusions of cash, the month of April ought to be a test. It will be important to watch what the building industry does this month. If it fails to take hold, you might as well kiss goodbye to the present much advertised "recovery."

John T. Flynn.

The Desert, the Dare Boys and Coney

As far as story and situation go, there is little to keep "The Lost Patrol" from being the empty thriller you might expect. A squad of men (part of the English forces in Mesopotamia in 1917) are cut off in the desert, their officer killed, their horses stolen. While they are surrounded by unseen Arabs and sniped off one by one, they bicker with each other, and make dashes for it, and go mad, and babble of God and mother. All through the picture the fond-recollection motif is unconvincing and much of the small talk artificial; Boris Karloff as the Man of God is not much good until he goes insane, and in general it is lost sight of that a character may be very tough, or he may be very tender, but not both at the same time. All that is needed to make the whole business impossible, in fact, is some such man of action as Richard Dix for the star role. Yet the story gets over its melodramatic obstacles and builds up into fairly tense drama, thanks partly to direction but mostly to Victor McLaglen. As the sergeant, the leader of men and buttress against their infirmities, he has a toughness that goes beyond the strong irregularities of his face, and a bulge to him that is something more than torso and chest muscles. You can sense all the elements he is fighting without their being made articulate, and when he is about to crack—his last man killed off and he getting the snipers out into the open finally, half-crazy and laughing and blazing away with the machine gun—you seem to share in an experience. "The Lost Patrol" could have more faults than it now shows and still be rather worth seeing for that.

From such a piece of frank adventure it is a far cry, in both intent and accomplishment, to Amkino's latest release, "Broken Shoes," a Russian-dialogue film with English titles, directed by Margaret Barskaya. The children of several working families in a "European" (actually, German) city sense the misery of their class and leave off school pranks to offer their services to the strikers, giving battle to the school authorities and finally taking part in a mass demonstration that brings out the troops, armed and with orders to shoot. The strikers come to a halt before the leveled rifles, but a child goes forward ("They won't shoot the children"). A salvo rattles out, and the child is brought home and laid out on the table, and outside there is a storm of butchery. But while there are bits of telling direction here and there, and while the work of at least two of the children is like nothing I have seen before —clear, unaffected, moving—the general upshot of it for me is a feeling of the Dare Boys and the National Crisis. "Broken Shoes" is cut-and-dried, overstated, strained. Its

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producers fail to see that truth is not a formulaic concoction, to be thinly coated with something glucose and fired into the market like buckshot; but rather a quality of light, effective only when inherent in the material and allowed to play naturally through it. In common with the rather tedious and distinctly uninspired travelogue "A Day in Moscow" (also an Amkino release, also showing at the Cameo Theatre in New York City), "Broken Shoes" manages to bungle its statement—which was mostly true—and to frustrate its original intention—which was single and earnest and toward a recognizable ideal.

But partaking, however remotely, of such qualities as truth and earnestness, these films still have something more admirable about them than has the work of such contemporary craftsmen as, having nothing to say and less wit to say it with, combine these two qualities with advertising to pack movie houses. A particularly good example of this sort of thing is "Riptide," the story of a lord who married a lady thinking her true, but later thinking her false (though true she still was), and then thinking her true again (she having by this time and out of boredom become mildly false) and then finding her false (though to be sure she couldn't keep it up and was by this time true again) and finally discovering that she was his wife after all (which everybody had known all along). In the face of which Herbert Marshall and Norma Shearer are powerless. Written and directed by one of Hollywood's own, Mr. Edmund Goulding, the film cries aloud with its maker's desire to do something that will be at the same time significant and swell. Its grave probing of human relations turns out to be a rehash of Victorian platitudes, its explorations of sex a rather vague report to the effect that a man may be somewhat choosey about whom his wife sleeps with; and as for the splendor of its setting, it is a most vulgar and Coney Island splendor. However, it should serve to cheer people up about the ordinary badness of other, less pretentious works of art springing from the same loins.

OTIS C. FERGUSON.

CORRESPONDENCE

The End of a Debate

SIR: In reply to Max Eastman's letter in The New Republic of March 28, permit me to say the following:

Now that I am informed that the word "things," in Eastman's quotation from "The Eighteenth Brumaire," crept in through error, I gladly withdraw my charge of misquotation. But until I am informed that Eastman's comment on that quotation also came in through a printer's error, I am regretfully obliged to adhere to my charge of crude misinterpretation. Eastman's comment in his article ran as follows: "They [men] make their own history, but they are also capable, in the person of the Marxist, of knowing the inevitable outcome of that making. And this is because the general course of history is determined not by the nature of man, but by the *nature of things*." This comment shows that Eastman not only completely misunderstands the quoted passage, but also that he has yet to learn the ABC of economic determinism.

My very brief explanation of Engels' conception of social evolution, Eastman seems to regard as an evasion. "Instead of replying to this," he proposes another conundrum. He produces a passage from Engels' "Anti-Dühring," relating to cosmic and organic evolution, and brands it as "quite obviously the survival of a religious belief," "an attribution to the stars and planets of behavior that is nothing short of sublimely ideal," an expression of "that same faith in a benign universe which Marx expressed in the sphere of sociology and history," "animistic"—in the familiar strain of Max Eastman's anti-Marxist campaign. Here are the words of Engels:

> With the French [materialists] of the eighteenth century, and with Hegel, the conception obtained of nature as a whole, moving in narrow cycles and remaining ever the same, with stable celestial bodies, as Newton taught, and immutable organic species, as Linnæus taught. According to modern materialism . . . nature also [*i.e.*, like society] has its history in time. The celestial bodies, like the organic species that under favorable conditions inhabit them, arise and vanish. And the cycles, so far as they can be admitted at all, assume infinitely vaster dimensions.

To the unchanging world of Newton and Linnæus, Engels opposes the nebular hypothesis of Kant and Laplace and the Darwinian theory of organic evolution. In this Eastman finds animism, religious survival, etc., etc.! What is one to make of this? To speak of Marx, who conceives the whole history of civilization as dominated by its tragic class struggles, as a blind optimist, is an abuse of words. I can only conclude that it is simply impossible for Eastman to read the words of the great communists fairly, that he has become possessed of a mania to pervert the simple meaning of their words into monstrous absurdity.

To the charge of believing in the historic necessity of communism, I plead guilty, without any proviso, reservation or circumlocution. No defeats of the workers, no triumphs of the counter-revolutionary forces, can shake my belief in the ultimate victory of the proletarian revolution. If the World War and the world economic crisis have not convinced Eastman of the decrepitude of capitalism, of what avail can be any words of mine?

I do not intend to follow Eastman into the generalities in which he is seeking refuge. In my article I have shown him to be wrong in every important particular.

HERMAN SIMPSON.

New York City.

Bettering Motion Pictures

SIR: All over the country, little groups of men and women are meeting to discuss the question of how to get better motion pictures and how to improve the quality of the films shown their children. Their efforts are not so effective as they might be, however, because they are not mobilized and hence their voices are not heard.

For four years the Motion Picture Research Council, with offices at 366 Madison Avenue, New York City, has been mainly concerned with research into the problem of the movies, and now, on the basis of this research, it has advanced from the stage of investigation to that of action. It now seeks to bind together these various groups in one central organization which will be ready for effective action.

Our research has shown that the film has such strong influence on the emotions and intellect of children as to become for good or evil a most powerful educational factor. Our investigation has also shown that the attendance of minors at the movies in the United States is twenty-eight million a week, more than eleven millions of whom are under fourteen years of age. Yet the pictures shown take little account of the large juvenile attendance. They are mainly concerned with crime, passion and love as interpreted by the movies—surely an unbalanced diet for children. One of the purposes of the Council is to change this diet, so far as children are concerned. We want special attention paid to the creation of films for children, just as book publishers pay special attention to the production of juvenile books.

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We are not anxious to censor the motion picture, nor are we interested in government control. Rather, we want to release the motion-picture art from some of the trade restrictions which now surround it, to enrich it, and to make it more varied and representative of life so that it will be better able to fill its role of the nation's entertainer and teacher. It has already made great advances, and many individual pictures have attained high standards of excellence. We want to bring our influence to bear on the problem in such a way that the proportion of good pictures will steadily increase, and we are organizing so that our membership will spread across the country until we have with us a substantial portion of all those who are interested in bettering the motion picture and helping it to realize its highest possibilities.

FLEANOR R. BELMONT, *President*,
New York City. The Motion Picture Research Council.

Courage of Philosophers

SIR: In a review by F. Vinton Lindley of Mr. C. E. M. Joad's "A Guide to Modern Thought," the reviewer stated that "The essential error of the author is in treating psychology as a philosophy . . . whereas psychology is no more philosophy than obstetrics. The subject is properly a branch of medicine...." Further on Mr. Lindley accuses Mr. Joad of identifying behaviorism with a final philosophy of life, which confusion "is the kind of reasoning which, though strictly valid in an abstract logical sense, encourages the average man to regard philosophers as animals with their tails in their mouths running in circles." Such superficial criticism should not go unchallenged. It is typical of most criticisms of philosophy to be found in current literature. . . .

While it is barely possible that psychology should not be treated *as a* philosophy, it is imperative that it be considered philosophically, since only philosophers have the courage and the patience necessary to pour the special sciences into the crucible of first principles. And when this is done, it may be found that certain psychologies *are* philosophies, regardless of the protestations of their originators or converts. To be specific, the Behaviorist, whether he knows it or not, is accepting a theory of first principles by believing in the efficacy of physical research to solve all the problems of psychology, and in his use of the findings of other physical sciences to substantiate and complement his own discoveries. It is the same theory as that held by certain modern physicists and astronomers and by many pre-Socratic Greek philosophers. What the Behaviorist fails lamentably to see is, that this theory involves certain necessary implications, which when carried to their logical conclusions, are incompatible with other behavioristic beliefs, for instance, the denial of consciousness. . . .

As for the practicality of "abstract logic," it would be interesting to have Mr. Lindley explain how Einstein, by the use of pure logic in the formulation of the special and general theories of relativity, was able to . . . correct erroneous calculations of the motion of astronomical bodies. Perhaps Einstein should have referred his work to the "average man" before being sure of its validity.

Brooklyn, N. Y. E. T. GUSTAFSON.

Facts, Real and Reported

SIR: As I am always much interested in the articles of The New Republic, I regret very much that the author of "The New Kultur—First Anniversary" in the issue of February 14, Verne Andrews, shows such a lack of information concerning the conditions in Germany.

If somebody wants to state statistically the development of life in art and literature it is obviously necessary to give real figures. For instance, the statement concerning the number of radio listeners is absolutely wrong. The official numbers of the Deutsche Reichspost for January 1, 1934, are 5,052,607; for December 1, 1933, 4,837,549, and for January 1, 1933, 4,307,722. This means that during the whole year there has been an increase of more than 17 percent. On January 1, 1934, there were 508,429 listeners who did not have to pay the monthly radio tax, and on January 1, 1933, there were 512,141.

How is it then possible, as Verne Andrews states, that "many people have sold or disconnected their radios" or that there has been "a diminution of the total funds from the two-marks radio tax"? Is the author really only misinformed? I know it is not nice to doubt the honesty of an author. But it is peculiar that in the same way the statements concerning the tendency of the movies or the number of concerts are wrong. It is unfair to compare the conditions now to be found in Germany with those of about six years ago during prosperity. Not since 1927 could you find five concerts on the same evening in Berlin.

Why don't you publish real facts?

Lawrence, Kan. H. PUELL.

SIR: When I was in Germany I had statistics presented to me proving that the export business had not decreased but was in a sound and healthy condition. From other semi-official sources, I was told that the export situation was bad and that something would have to be done immediately to relieve Germany.

I was told by sources that I consider more reliable than official sources that the private use of radio had decreased, and that the tax had correspondingly increased. Since that time, many schools have been required to install radios in order that the pupils may hear adequate propaganda. I do not believe that even with the addition of these, Mr. Puell's "official statistics" are correct.

Of course it is impossible to reveal a private source of information in Germany without jeopardizing the safety of the individual who has given the unflattering information. The source of my musical statements is a music critic who has covered the Berlin musical scene since pre-depression days and is considered a man of integrity and consequence by Germans as well as Americans.

I can only ask Mr. Puell, in holding that my informal sources are as good as, if not better than, his officials ones, what he thinks of the official statistics of the recent German election? Several instances in connection with the voting made me wonder about its accuracy. People I know were handed envelopes containing several identical ballots, and when they marked all of them in the presence of poll watchers and threw them in the box, nothing was said to deter them. Others stated that, although private booths were provided, the watchers said, "You can stand right here at the table to mark in your X."

But the most amazing proof of inaccuracy in figures was furnished by a tired young Nazi who was late to a party that a friend of mine attended on election night. When asked why he was so late, the young Storm Trooper said naïvely, "Oh, they kept me busy marking in X's."

Washington, D. C. VERNE ANDREWS.

Extracts from Letters

IN ANOTHER column we print Mr. Simpson's reply to Mr. Eastman's rejoinder to Mr. Simpson's answer to Mr. Eastman's article on the uses and abuses of the Marxian dialectic, which (the first of the series) appeared in our issue of February 21. Most of the letters we have received about the controversy carry the faint aroma of theology, battling at best over concepts and sometimes even over words.

Miss Eva Hoar writes from Key West, Florida, that "the Marxian appeal is to those why deny the significance for them of a national or unified society attitude in any culture, to those who recognize culture as derived from and inherent in a class. They do this because they are 'scientists,' realizers of fact. . . ." Miss Hoar further adds that Mr. Eastman's "preference and tendency towards inaction become 'skeptical Anglo-Saxon culture.'"

Mr. Frederick H. Bunting of Arden, North Carolina, comes at Mr. Eastman from another angle. He is amazed, he writes, that "Mr. Eastman could think that he can stop the progress of communism by showing the faults in [the communists'] thought processes. And not all of Marx's are faulty." There is, he says, "a kernel of truth" in some.

From Eckville, Alberta, Mr. George Christie writes to know why Marxians are "so 'ratty' when twitted about their metaphysic," and from Riga, Latvia, Mr. John A. Burtneck wishes to express his thanks for the "amusement" he obtained from Mr. Simpson's "call to worship," which is, he says, "peculiarly adapted to uphold Mr. Eastman's views about the religious frame of mind of those enmeshed in the intricacies of the dialectic trinity."

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Moor Born

Moor Born, by Dan Totheroh. The Playhouse, April 3, 1934.

PLAYS around biography, in particular the lives of women authors, have come forward in the theatre these past few seasons and seem likely to increase. Three plays, for example, about the Brontës are reported. "Moor Born" is by Dan Totheroh, the author of "Wild Birds," produced some years ago, a play with genuine pathos, and more recently of "Distant Drums," in which there was a sort of dramatic mysticism far out of the common. Both of these plays had in them qualities that should feed the special needs of this new Brontë theme. Watching Miss Helen Gahagan's performance, I could see that some of these qualities the dramatist had at least had in his mind, though how much was his and how much Miss Gahagan's could not be said. But as to the play itself you could say very little. Stripped of its literary and outside aids, that is to say if seen by someone who never heard of the Brontës one way or another, "Moor Born" would be hard to make out. As a representative of these historical-literary plays, and as a problem in the slant, stress or method to be applied to a mass of material, it would, however, stand a comment.

Taking this Brontë material from a modern angle, the amount of dramatic substance in it is immense. The situation actually is beyond most that Strindberg himself could have created. The narrow house, the father's fantastic obsession about the son, followed by Emily's devotion, her solitary wanderings over the moors, her brother's death, the interweaving of the three sisters' lives, the force that went into her great novel of "Wuthering Heights," and finally her own death; taking all these, it is easy to imagine what diverse modern dramatists would have done with such matter. This point is, in fact, so obvious that it is not worth mentioning, lest we flatter all the little pocket Freuds that go around knowing everything about everything. But there is a point less obvious. It has two aspects. One is that we inherit from the Victorians a hesitation in these matters, and that it is not natural to us even technically, perhaps, to treat the material in this underdelving manner, throwing analysis, interrogation and psychology so freely around on the life presented in a work of art. When we try it we are apt to do so self-consciously, or not quite racially, or not quite in taste, or with a hint of adolescence, or even at the worst a little slimily. The other aspect is that we largely evade these implications and confrontations, and seek to create a poetry of surface, perhaps a domesticated sentiment, an atmosphere in which we free ourselves (or hope or pretend to) and can thus move toward a homely divinity that lies within the everyday. To go back to the hard point, it is this: The modernistic and psychological method applied to this Brontë household finds it hard to include the miracle and wonder that culminated in "Wuthering Heights"—analyze that creation if you can and discover the right glandular and libido formula for it! The other method, shy and not emancipated from suspicions of propriety, and not quite free of starlight and the memory of wonder, finds it easier to include such culminations of that Haworth rectory life as "Jane Eyre" and "Wuthering Heights" than to handle the complexes of its literal psychology.

Strindberg, as an exception among modern dramatists, could have got in both these values, sullying a little the fruits but exciting the source of them into a vitality that easily becomes splendor. It could not be said that Mr. Totheroh did either. I have no idea, to tell the truth, what he thought any of the play was about; and such scenes as that where the Brontë girls choose their pen names—in the tone of what shall we give Grandpa for Christmas? ah yes, slippers—or Charlotte, under the rule of Miss Frances Starr's devastating competence, breaks the news to the father that they are all writers these daughters of his, where Emily dies, absorbed in pity for the dead brother, came off flabby and flat. The whole play reverted entirely to your reading or literary suppositions, and remained a puzzle of unachievement. It had not reality, which might have anchored the whole in some actual conviction and grip of life. It had not style, in a formal sense, which might have designed a drama of clear and noble qualities from life and made a fine redrawing of the living characters involved.

Another way to have done this play would have been in monotone, in the now obvious Chekhov method.

Another, and doubtless the supreme approach, would have been through the paganism, the Byronic but more stoical fatalism, the endurance and romance of Emily Brontë's own temperament, even as we get it in the portraits of her in Charlotte's novels and most of all in "Wuthering Heights" itself. It is hard to see how, with merely the single record of Emily's death, sitting there combing her long hair till the comb falls into the grate, she could have left her playwright so mild and obliterative. And it would have been a good thing, I believe, to have emphasized in Emily's character more of that final happiness that Maeterlinck speaks of in her, something that he considers abides when emotion passes away, though there may be other ways of expressing this quality, so rich with inner event, that she brought at length to her novel.

These qualities in Emily Brontë Miss Helen Gahagan seemed to me to understand. She had gathered them rather out of her own imagination than from any lines the play provided her. In the last act, the death scene, Miss Gahagan came off less well. As it stood, nobody could have succeeded in this scene. The solution—in the absence of the dramatist's creating the whole for you—would, perhaps, be egotism, the kind of thing that Sarah Bernhardt had in a death scene, which seemed to say, "Everybody get out of the way. I'm going to die, this is death, this is the music of death, the thrill, the cold sweat, the glamor of me and death combined!" But Miss Gahagan is not like that as a stage egotism; so that all there was left was to turn the lights down, ask Miss Starr to hesitate now and then before executing a passage, wear a more dramatic costume for Emily's dressing-gown, pause more, and demand from the audience more of a certain hush and tragic suspension.

Miss Gahagan is one of the very few people on our stage who could have had most of the perennial, banal or flaunting things of it. Perhaps she should have accepted them; perhaps not. At any rate she deserves not a better but a better written role for her return. STARK YOUNG.

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Spring Book Section

These Jews Were Germans[1]

OF THESE four books the first, "Murder—Made in Germany," is badly written and has no unity; the second, "German Family," although its theme is man's inhumanity to man, reads like and leaves the impression of light fiction; "The Oppermanns" is solid and exciting, conceived and realized by an artist, the best novel Feuchtwanger has written; while the last, "I Was a German," has a misleading title (it was originally called "Eine Jugend in Deutschland"), is the record of Toller's activities as a young man, and ends in 1923; the Nazis are mentioned only because later they became important, and here they are underestimated as they were ten years ago.

After reading these books the reviewer (who looks like the Jew that he is), depressed and melancholy wandered through the New York streets, feeling that it was only an accident he was not living in Spain of the fifteenth, in Ukrainia of the seventeenth, in Russia of the nineteenth century, or in Germany today, and feeling besides that it was perfectly possible to imagine that right here in America before very long he might find himself thrown off subway trains, his face spat on, might find his stories refused by editors because of his given name, might be beaten in the cellar of a police station, or imprisoned in a concentration camp, be disciplined daily until he collapsed, and then beaten more until he died, "killed while trying to escape," because of the shape of his nose and the Oriental color of his complexion.

It would be unreasonable, illogical, contradictory; yet it might happen. It was just as unreasonable in Germany. The Junkers had been disgraced, the Kaiser had run away, a republic had been ordered and then proclaimed, the poor took off their uniforms and went back to the factories, the rich finagled the currency until the mark disappeared and they became richer and more cultured. Human dignity triumphed. All was peace, and prosperity was coming. Surely the Jewish employers were not exploiting the workers a bit more than did their Christian colleagues. Martin Oppermann, the Jewish furniture manufacturer of Feuchtwanger's book, was even kinder and more charitable than his competitor, the Nazi Heinrich Wels. Besides, he had for a brother Dr. Gustav Oppermann, a famous esthete, who felt such responsibility as a leader of the development of the essential German soul (not guilt because all of his life he had exquisitely profited from others' toil and starvation) that after having escaped to the Riviera, he had to go back to Germany, get himself captured, imprisoned, and Christlike tortured, and give up his life so that perhaps through almost mystic death he could understand what had really happened (and yet for all his sacrificial gesture remained a silly man, unreal, romantic, and terribly, tragically useless). Martin did not understand, neither did Gustav, neither did another brother, the still more famous surgeon, Professor Dr. Edgar Oppermann, who was torn away from an operation he was performing to be sent into exile. And no one can understand the value of the noble but so pitifully tiny and ineffectual gesture of that brilliant lad Berthold Oppermann who took his life rather than deny something he thought was true.

It is about time Jews learned the small value of protesting and trying to prove by martyrdom their own nobility of soul, and of appealing to others' sense of fairness. They have been doing it as long as history can remember, and today, in this civilized, cultured, enlightened world, they are treated in many countries just about as they were in the very Darkest Ages—and even in those ages there were always countries where the Jews were treated well. They are the most unassimilable elements in any community, and the most recognizable minority, and in times of stress they will always get the blame, obliquely deflected though it is to them by those who have the power and the profits. If they are completely disinterested and innocent they should at least help form a society in which no one will be blamed, because no one will feel himself robbed and wronged.

In "Murder—Made in Germany" there is a good approach to the understanding of the sudden horror that flooded Germany. A fishing steamer that, without wireless, left Hamburg before Christmas returns after the Reichstag fire and finds floating in the bay a dying man stabbed in many places. But from this point the author, although he tries to write from the worker's point of view, is overcome by his subject, goes melodramatic and peters out. In the three other books the horror and the injustice are felt only by those who, until the apparent madness came, were honorable, had dignity, experienced justice. There is to be sure an odd sentence in "German Family": "The real tragedy of the Nazi persecution lay with the working classes." But scarcely anything else is said about the working class. In "The Oppermanns," Feuchtwanger ignores it entirely, until the picture of Germany one gets in the first part of his novel, the section called "Yesterday," is of a Utopian land where each man is comfortably busy with his affairs and each woman with her home and sentimental loyalties. Every other little trouble perhaps can be cured by Love. Oh, yes, there is this senseless thing spouted by the Nazis; but after all, gentlemen, the inherent dignity of man, the universal sense of fairness and of justice. . . .

But underneath the ferment among those who own and want to keep, there is an as yet perhaps inarticulate class to which Dignity, Fairness, Justice, are not concepts but words (as Fatigue and Hunger are only words to the prosperous people about whom these books are written). This other class knows only death in the trenches and misery at home. It has been traduced, vilified or ignored

[1] Murder—Made in Germany, by Heinz Liepmann. New York: Harper and Brothers. $2.50.
German Family, by L. C. N. Stone. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. $2.50.
The Oppermanns, by Lion Feuchtwanger. New York: The Viking Press. $2.50.
I Was a German: The Autobiography of Ernst Toller. New York: William Morrow and Company. 294 pages. $2.75.

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by almost everyone articulate, from Shakespeare down. It has been used, exploited, appealed to in trouble, and betrayed when the trouble passed. Often it has found that its leaders when really tested reverted to their own class. Even Toller, who was head of the Bavarian Soviet Republic after the War, in times like these can speak of "the inconquerable impulses of humanity—the longing for freedom, for justice, for beauty"—can become only an esthete.

This class which always has been called the lower class has been developing its own lower-class leaders, who are not, as Feuchtwanger pictures them, mysterious prophets with a mystic mission. They are very realistic people. They know that when each man has bread, then dignity, if it is really an unconquerable human impulse, will flourish on this earth. Until then to speak of it is treason. Until then dignity is dead, and gentlemen must tremble.

NATHAN ASCH.

Let There Be Wealth

The Economy of Abundance, by Stuart Chase. New York: The Macmillan Company. 327 pages. $2.50.

AN ATTRACTIVE stylist and phrase maker, Stuart Chase in this book distinguishes between making money and making goods. Business emphasizes profit-making and vendibility, whereas industry would maximize production and serviceability. When we begin really to use our productive abilities we shall achieve the Economy of Abundance.

Marx long since pointed to the influence of the technological factor in shaping history and Veblen long since, in "The Theory of the Business Enterprise" and in "The Instinct of Workmanship," stressed the contest between vendibility and serviceability. Chase occupies the role, therefore, not so much of an originator, as rather of an excellent expositor of a point of view. The approach is very valuable, however, because both the Marxian and Veblenian orientations are not commonly recognized by economic writers. Great masses of economic literature link the concept of money making and goods making and a morality is read into the economic process by the assumption that people make money by making goods.

Perhaps the failure to distinguish between money-making and goods-making was not particularly significant to the writings of Adam Smith and the writers of the nineteenth century. That was a period of rapid growth in population, of geographical expansion, of the spread of transportation systems, of improved communication, and of the consequent enlargement of markets. To a great extent a market was practically waiting throughout the period for the complete output of the existing technology. But in the United States about 1880, goods-making and profit-making entered into a new phase and today we find practically every industry seeking codes to restrict production. Indeed, one of the outstanding philosophies beneath the N.R.A. and the A.A.A. is that of obtaining prosperity through increasing prices and reducing production. Thus, Chase's point of view needs to be stressed as never before.

Not less important is his ability to unearth the concepts of the engineer and the scientist and make them organic to economics. For example, Chase writes:

> Recently I watched a photoelectric cell inspecting tin cans. Its job was to see that each can was properly labeled. The cans were coming down a conveyor belt so rapidly that it was difficult to see them one by one. A beam of light played on each can as it passed a given point. If the label was in place, it absorbed the light. If there was no label the beam was reflected into the eye of the watchful cell. Instantly the cell transformed the light impulse, and set a mechanism in motion which knocked the can off the moving line. It happened so fast that one could follow the course only with the aid of a diagram.

It is not necessary to elaborate on the work of the photoelectric cell and other techniques listed by Chase. The point is that the intellectual implications of these factors, in bringing about changes in our industrial system and in the relations of people within it, are far from realized by contemporary thought.

One of the striking things about the expansion of production in the 1920's and in the present expansion is that output has increased a great deal faster than employment; second, the output per man-hour is greater now than it was in 1928; third, present prices—the dollar value of production, which is the seller's claim—have outrun the increase in wages and purchasing power arising from industry apart from government subsidies. Who knows but what the photoelectric cells already have got us!

I have a sadistic wish that the literate population of the United States be required to read a recognized orthodox book on economics such as J. B. Clark's book, "The Distribution of Wealth," with its mystical identification of goods-making, profit-making, property rights and ethical distribution of the spoils of industry among all contestants, as a condition precedent to reading "The Economy of Abundance." Then the orientation and the subject matter of Chase's book would win the recognition they deserve.

WILLARD E. ATKINS.

A Great Reporter

Duranty Reports Russia, by Walter Duranty. Selected and arranged by Gustavus Tuckerman, Jr. New York: The Viking Press. 414 pages. $2.75.

THIS IS not a book. It is a history, many volumes in one, of a world philosophy as expressed in day-to-day acts and policies in every department of life. If the reader gets the significance of all that is contained in these news dispatches reporting the details of the building of a new society, he will have an analysis, a challenge to and new light on all his thinking.

It is true that Russia is an acid test. Russia tests her visitors, reporters, commentators, as much as they think they are testing her. It tests their character, manners and *Weltanschauung*. Duranty is that rare reporter who puts everything he knows into or back of his every report; the man shines through the news dispatches as a great musician shines through the sonata he is playing. Duranty is an understanding man writing about things that challenge the best understanding. For many years he reported on foreign affairs to an essentially unfriendly audience, and won them; whether they liked what he wrote or not, they learned to respect his judgment.

In the process this reporter showed that journalism can be literature and, not infrequently, poetry. It would be difficult to read his accounts of the death of Lenin and how the Russian people took it, and remain any more dry-eyed than the members of the presiding committee who "laid their heads on the table [before ten thousand people] and cried like children."

Characterizations of the Russian leaders stick in the mind: "Radek, the Odysseus of many devices, Kamenev, the

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crafty old war-horse, the polished and subtle Rakovsky, Bukharin, whom Lenin loved, Rykov, the wise Agamemnon, who balanced this against that and argued forth and back." The analysis of Lenin's character and that of his disciple, Stalin—"not successor, disciple," as Stalin himself insists—is beautiful writing, and combines sensible, understandable Freudian interpretation (without the words "your tongue blushes to utter") with the Marxian theory that conditions form character. Little Soso's first battle and self-conquest was the revolt against his mother's hopes and prayers, and it was his hardest battle, thinks Duranty, harder than the prisons and exiles, the betrayals and Tammany struggles later, because "when you are young it hurts." No reader of this chapter on Stalin can ever think again of the Steel Dictator as a mere cruel tyrant of icy will. And in that same chapter, wrapped around with pleasant psychological and personal interpretations, lie the explanations of Bolshevik theory and action, that Lenin knew instinctively, that every political leader has to learn, that every Communist leader must practise.

Indeed, those gentlemen now filling the popular press with outraged fury at the "communists" and "agitators" history is throwing up might pause a moment and reflect on history as a process rather than a series of machinations of the Hidden Hand. "If all the clocks in the world were destroyed history would still go on," said an old labor leader of the West recently. In Duranty's dispatches there are frequently no clocks.

The selection has been made with something akin to genius. Fifteen years of an individual's life could fill volumes; fifteen years in a nation's life might fill the underground bookshelf-miles of the British Museum. Mr. Tuckerman has brought the fifteen years of the richest experiment in the world's history within the covers of one book that has about it no fragmentary incoherence, but gives the reader a rich feeling of overlooking a continent from a mountain's height. It is all here, from the price of eggs in the open market and the peasant sitting on the stove and spittin' on the ceiling, to "the deep faith men live by." The early days of the New Economic Policy, stories, devastating in their vividness, of the early famine, the ragged wild boys, accounts of the relation of Church and State, blunders of the government, antagonisms aroused at home and abroad. The peasant, the party policy, discipline, play and work, sowing campaigns and harvests, the drama and the pettinesses, political speeches and economic philosophy, all are to be found in these pages as they occurred. The changes made in policies as conditions changed—that "dialectic principle most difficult for the student of communism to understand"—are set forth clearly, with the frank admissions of Soviet leaders of their mistakes, their explanations for strategic retreats and the picture of untarnished faith, always, in the final result.

Duranty does not merely tell you that Soviet citizens think human nature can change. He shows you the "different" children growing up. "The Pioneers are the freest, most upstanding and intelligent children I have ever met anywhere . . . this correspondent is willing to go on record that no youngsters anywhere have a better time or are more likely to make more useful citizens." He is nobody's yes-man, this correspondent; he's not a "but on the other hand" journalist. He gives facts and explains them, without fear or prejudice. He speaks for himself. And he's the kind of man you will listen to when he speaks.

And some grim credit must go to The New York Times for letting Duranty speak. The Times has gained, and so has the world.

ELLA WINTER.

When Pilots Disagree

The New Dealers, by Unofficial Observer. New York: Simon and Schuster. 423 pages. $2.75.

THE CURRENT rumor that "The New Dealers" is the product of a whole group of Washington newspapermen, rather than the work of a single hand, seems very plausible on an examination of the book itself. In the first place, it is most unlikely that any single "observer" could acquire all the personal knowledge and inside information as to each department of the Roosevelt administration that this volume reveals. In the second place, while the style is consistently interesting, it varies from chapter to chapter through all the phases of mordant irony, lighthearted good-humor, sober exposition and highly emotional eulogy. In the third place, there is an inconsistency in attitude and thought as striking as the variety in style. If the Unofficial Observer is one person, he must be an extraordinarily muddle-minded individual with an extraordinarily versatile pen; if he is many persons, this book is an evidence of the brilliance of American journalism today so far as sheer writing (not thinking) is concerned.

"The New Dealers" is primarily a book of political personalities, secondarily a discussion of political policies. In its first phase it includes shrewdly critical, though rarely entirely unsympathetic, portraits of the leading figures in any way connected with the administration, from the President down. Roosevelt himself is depicted as a high-minded "Christian gentleman" of great moral energy and no originality of ideas; the "best brains" in the administration are found in the A.A.A., where Wallace and Tugwell form a "titanic team"; the greatest efficiency, moral courage and radical intent are located in the C.W.A. under Harry Hopkins, and in the Department of Labor under Frances Perkins. The N.R.A. comes off badly in comparison, with General Johnson described as "just a mischievous boy" whose "bark is worse than his bite" and Donald Richberg depicted as an "aging radical" who has gone conservative. For the labor leaders connected with the N.R.A. the book has little save contempt: John L. Lewis is a good fighter but "mentally he is on a par with Jack Dempsey or Primo Carnera"; as for Green and Woll, "it is easy to write off Green as a total loss until you consider Matthew Woll—and then you heave a sigh of gratitude for Bill Green."

In striking contrast to its vigorous treatment of personalities is the flabbiness of the book's discussion of policies. It insists in the first chapter that the New Deal marks a "revolution" embodying the ideas of Henry George, Bellamy, Phillips Brooks (!) and Gompers (!!). This revolution to effect a radical "redistribution of wealth" turns out, in subsequent chapters, to be "decreasing purchasing power by excessive price increases made possible by the N.R.A. open-price agreements" so that the labor gains of higher wages (in so far as these exist) and the farmers' gains through crop reduction (in so far as they too exist) have been much more than neutralized by the higher cost of living. The only ones actually to profit from the new situation, we are told, are "the big boys," who have been "getting away with murder." It is a strange "revolution" that leaves the same people in power after it as before, a strange "redistribution of wealth" that merely adds more wealth to those who already have too much.

Of the most aggressive leaders in this unrevolving revolution, Senator Wagner is described as "a fascist," operating like the rest of the N.R.A. group, on "the merely fascist level of collective principles and collusive practices," Tug-

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well the "titan" is "a genuine conservative who would save the profit system and private ownership of property," while Professor Warren, the real director of the administration's financial policy, "sees nothing wrong with capitalism." Such contradictions between the premises and the conclusions of the book may be attributed to multiple authorship, may be taken as another illustration of American inability to think in terms of principles instead of personalities. Or they may be regarded as a reportorial reflection of the confusion of mind in an opportunist administration that has ported its helm to starboard and is going full speed ahead and astern.

ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES.

"T. E. 'Lawrence'"

Colonel Lawrence: The Man Behind the Legend, by Liddell Hart. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company. 400 pages. $3.75.

THE WORLD WAR, our time's dreariest triumph, has little in the way of heroism elevated to legend, or of human nobility that defies recent researches of the ironic historian. A big markdown sale of death where mortal merchandise was thrown away in extreme largesse, it seems now unreal in its memory as it was in its immediacy, pointless, impersonal, appreciable only in its tentacle effects. It is common to say in its despite that the last war fought for principle was the American Civil War.

The last great war fought for principle was waged by Lawrence, an Englishman, towards the possibility of a United States of Islam. The story of his campaigns waged on a small quantitative scale in comparison with the morass of blood along French rivers, is packed with economies of swift action, quick effect, which are, unlike histories of any other theatre of the conflict, still relevant and legible to us, taking on yearly the classic aura of magnificence shared by the captains of Cannae, Crécy and Cold Harbor.

Lawrence increasingly rises as a unique figure of the twentieth century in the Western World who, in relation to his personal qualities as manifest in his life, commands our acute attention for his practical relevance. Heretofore obscured by a superficial legend, he is revealed to us in Captain Liddell Hart's superb book; now we can know as much about him as we need to test opinion. For in Lawrence, as in no other living Westerner, meet the most pertinent moral conflicts of the century, the relationship of the East to the West, and of the common man or mass of men to the individual.

> The Ageyl, on an order, moved out to right and left as wings. A patter of drums, and the poet of the right wing burst into a song, of Feisal and the delights he would afford them in Wejh. The right wing took up the refrain. A few moments later the poet of the left wing retorted with a similar extempore verse, and then the whole bodyguard burst into their marching song.

A subaltern on indefinite leave, an ex-archeologist, Lawrence was alien and yet master. An energy of ferocious excess accompanied this march into deserts at the moment when the only songs on the Somme were the mechanical noises of huger murder. Yet in spite of Elizabethan parallels, Lawrence was an Englishman of his day. The war he waged was modern warfare, utilizing explosive and airplane, even though the terrain was sand and his troops Oriental.

Captain Liddell Hart makes quite clear the significance of the Arab revolt as useful to the grand plans of the Allies, and clearer than that, Lawrence's consummate skill as a technician in war. When his accomplishment is divested of its mystery and each small step is displayed in particular logic, there is no dulling the edge of glamor. The feats of Lawrence glow brighter when one considers the backgrounds of information he had—no Arab, yet a master of dialects, no soldier, luckily, but acquainted with all classical exemplars of battle art. As general, Lawrence's greatness lay in his reduction of the element of accident to the minimum; unlike other generals, he was avaricious of the lives of his companions. "My personal duty was command, and I began to unravel command and analyze it, both from the point of view of strategy, the aim of war, the synoptic regard which sees everything by the standard of the whole; and from the point of view called tactics, the means toward the strategic end, the steps of its staircase." Lawrence has the flexible attention of a craftsman always, whether he is tabulating principles for handling Arab manners, calculating maximum destruction of a charge of T.N.T., weaving the double-barreled diplomacy of super-Oriental duplicity, now for use against English superiors, then against Arab allies, or reviving the Homeric diction into iron English. Aircraftsman now, the carriage of planes and motorboats receives the cool affection of his easy interest, which by its very thoroughness has seemed so magical to a world whose only idea of craft is dilettantism or treachery.

It is not so impressive any longer that small and blond he could so powerfully affect the tribes. It is the Briton's imperial gift to pass in deserts. Burton, Doughty, Gertrude Bell, Wilfred Blunt and Bertram Thomas have also absorbed the basic principles of Islam, its complete practicalities of cause and effect. The Koran is no bible book; it is a way of life mastered. As literature it is only decoration to such travelers. Lawrence, not without accident, came to Arabia. "Of course the mere wishing to be an Arabian betrays the roots of a quirk—one will fix latitudes, the silly things, another collect plants or insects (not to eat, but to bring home), a third make war, which is coals to Newcastle. We fritter our allegiances and our loyalties." What Lawrence accomplished was not due to an empire builder's single purpose over disparate people. If it had been a like occasion in South Africa, Asia, the point of this story would not have been very different. Yet in Arabia, as an artist, he gives his signature to names of towns and desert tracks. There is that railroad siding where, tormented by most serious doubts, he withdrew from the feast of his own men and arranged all night the anguished corpses of his recent enemies into repose. There is Deraa, where he suffered torture which is not unthinkable only because he described it; Damascus, where in the moment of victory, in the pesthouse, his face was smacked with such an amazing destitution of irony; and near Azrak, the site of a campfire where he addressed the uncertain Serahin:

> We put it to them, not abstractly, but concretely, for their case, how life in mass was sensual only, to be lived and loved in its extremity. There could be no resthouses for revolt, no dividend of joy paid out. Its spirit was accretive, to endure as far as the senses would endure, and to use each such advance as base for further adventure, deeper privation, sharper pain.

As a boy of twenty-six he intended to be a general and knighted at thirty. In four years he underwent illuminations that no contemporary and few saints have enjoyed.

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With his unkept promises to his bloody brothers-in-arms, notions of temporal power seemed waste. Lawrence's vanity, his self-love or self-respect, or more exactly the occupation with his essence as opposed to other men's, was not diminished by wordly failure. It was canonized. He was free to investigate real objects of his interest, obscured till now by his impetus and by that quality which he later said he hated next only to being physically touched: animal spirits. He who had known how to make the strength of the Turks their weakness, the weakness of the Arabs their triumph, now turned to investigating his universe in his solitude.

With crippling modesty before which ordinary pride is bad manners, he has a way of diminishing every one of his great acts to the level of a personal excuse. His observations on average men as he has lived with them in monasteries of air force and tank corps should give the new messiahs pause. For he is compassionate in his information, yet realistic in his wisdom. He has accepted the religion of personal responsibility exhausted to the limits of his organism. "In each I found the same elements, one algebraical, one biological, a third psychological." In his life he has the shifty equilibrium of the intellectual, the physical, the emotional. A tripartite welding has developed a consciousness which would be fearful to imagine had he chosen other action. As he is, the residual consciousness is visible in his art, in "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom," the greatest book written by a man of action who is also an artist, and in that other unpublished book in whose frightful pages there is a new revelation of hope and hell. In his note on Homer he wrote, "Though a stickler for the prides of poets and a man who never misses the chance to cocker up their standing, yet he must be (like writers two thousand years after him) the associate of menials, making himself their friend and defender by understanding."

LINCOLN KIRSTEIN.

Go-Ahead Davy

Davy Crockett, by Constance Rourke. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 289 pages. $2.50.

The Adventures of Davy Crockett, Told Mostly by Himself, with illustrations by John W. Thomason, Jr. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 259 pages. $2.50.

WHEN Davy Crockett was forty-eight years old he sat down and wrote "The Narrative of the Life of David Crockett, of the State of Tennessee, Written by Himself." Thomas Chilton, former Baptist preacher, fellow congressman and professional party fixer, is generally thought to have collaborated with Crockett in the writing of the autobiography and the question of just how much Crockett owed to Chilton has always interested students of American literature—for the Narrative, no matter who wrote it, will remain a classic. It is highly probable that Chilton, who certainly knew his way about in the world, possessed more book learning than Davy did, but it is equally improbable that he had Davy's talent. Crockett's letters home, his speeches in Congress, all show wit and something like a genius for illustration. Fanny Kemble is like "a handsome piece of changeable silk." The twin plumes of smoke on a steamboat "lay back small and close as a wildcat's ears." A congressman's fair promises to his people are "worth about as much as a flash in the pan when you have a shot at a fat bear. . . ."

His ready wit and a gift for the hyperbole in which frontier humor always abounded stood the coonskin congressman in good stead when he arrived in Washington. 'Who are you?" asked a stranger. "I'm David Crockett," was the reply, "fresh from the backwoods, half horse, half alligator, a little touched with snapping turtle. I can wade the Mississippi, leap the Ohio, ride a streak of lightning, slip without a scratch down a honey locust, whip my weight in wildcats, hug a bear too close for comfort and eat any man opposed to Jackson."

In Constance Rourke this heroic figure has found a highly competent biographer. Miss Rourke's "Davy Crockett" seems designed primarily for boys, but it is a lively and well balanced narrative throughout and will interest older readers. The first chapters deal with Davy's youth, his exploits as a hunter with his famous pack of dogs and his even more famous "Betsy." "She's a mighty rough old piece but I love her. If I hold her right she always sends the ball where I tell her. . . ." Miss Rourke is as sympathetic to David Crockett, the congressman as she is to Davy, the hunter. He moves in her pages as a man possessed not only of a fierce frontier independence but also of a certain homely statesmanship. When Crockett "crept out of the cane to see what was going on among the white folks," went, that is, to Congress, he was disposed to eat any man who was opposed to Jackson. But he soon found himself in disagreement with his leader over the burning question of the disposal of the public lands. Crockett championed the rights of the small settlers—"these men of the Western waters, these men who have broken the cane"—against the land speculators. He clashed even more violently with Jackson over the measure for the removal of the Five Tribes to the new territory beyond the Mississippi. Some of Crockett's friends urged him not to oppose the Indian bill and pointed out that in opposing it he actually was not representing his constituency. "I'll wear no man's collar," he answered roundly. "The President is wrong and I know it." It was at this time that he formulated his famous motto: "Be always sure you're right and go ahead."

The espousal of lost causes is not the surest means to personal advancement. Crockett was defeated in 1831. He stood for election again in 1833 and was successful, but his popularity was on the wane from then on. He realized it, but he was not at a loss. All his life he had kept moving from one frontier to another. In 1835 on the verge of his defeat by Adam Huntsman, one-legged Jackson henchman, Crockett shouted to a group of his constituents: "If you elect a man with a timber toe to succeed me you may go to hell and I will go to Texas."

He did go to Texas and died heroically at the siege of the Alamo. Rumor has always had it that he was captured with four other Texans and brought before Santa Ana. Bound as he was he sprang at the Mexican general and died with half a dozen Mexican knives in him. Miss Rourke discredits this story on the evidence of a Mrs. Dickinson, who with a little girl and a Negro boy lay hid in one of the outer rooms of the fort during the entire siege. Crockett, Miss Rourke says, was never taken prisoner. He fell defending the wall on the south side of the barracks. "It was here that the fighting was hottest. The men from Tennessee fought with him. He fell with them fighting bitterly. Mrs. Dickinson spoke afterward of seeing him lying among the slain, his fur hunting cap at his side. . . ."

The new edition of Crockett's autobiography, a volume which also includes the Texas narrative, is illustrated by John W. Thomason, Jr. Captain Thomason's illustrations actually seem to add something to the text; they are vigorous and abound in rude frontier humor.

CAROLINE GORDON.

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Good Books That Almost Nobody Has Read

WE ASKED several novelists and critics—Sinclair Lewis, John Dos Passos, Edmund Wilson, Conrad Aiken and others—to send us short lists of the valuable and fairly recent books which they thought had been overlooked by the public.

"Each year," we said in most of the letters, not all of which were identical, "a few good books get lost in the shuffle. It may not be the fault of the publisher, the critic, the bookseller—it may not be anybody's fault except that of the general system by which too many books are distributed with an enormous lot of ballyhoo to not enough readers. Most of the good books are favorably reviewed, yet the fact remains that many of them never reach the people who would like and profit by them, the people for whom they are written. Then, after a while, the publisher remainders them and they are forgotten.

"Some week we should like to run a list of books like this, as a means of making amends to their authors—and perhaps also to the public that has so far missed the chance of reading them. Couldn't you think of two or three or four and jot down their names, preferably with a few sentences identifying them?" Most of the letters ended with a personal statement: "My own list would include books like Nathanael West's 'Miss Lonelyhearts,' Hart Crane's 'Collected Poems' (remaindered only a few months after publication), Katherine Anne Porter's 'Flowering Judas'—I can think of a dozen."

Here, in a somewhat abbreviated form, are most of the answers we received. The choice of books and the writers' comments on them are so interesting and straightforward that we wish we could print all of them in full.

John Dos Passos begins with a critique of American criticism. "The fact that most professional critics are overworked and confused by the flood of books and ballyhoo about books that roars over their heads every week makes it impossible for them to get any perspective on their work. The result is that there is no actual critical weeding out of books that may have permanent value for one reason or another. Everything published goes down the same chute out of the overbright glare of publicity into oblivion. In their brief passage some of the books sop up more money for their authors and publishers, and others less, but unless they hit the reprints and the cheap editions, their fate is the same in the long run. It is important to establish a public memory for good or for usefully informative writing.

"Here are some recent books I think should be kept out of the ash barrel":

"Laugh and Lie Down," by Robert Cantwell (Farrar, 1931). A straight and skillful and original first novel dealing with the first impact of industrial life on a young man growing up in a Pacific Slope town. Undoubtedly one of the best novels of the last ten years.

"Woman of Earth," by Agnes Smedley (Coward, 1929). An uneven but impressive I suppose autobiographical narrative of a young woman's life in a Western mining camp and in New York.

"Nobody Starves," by Catherine Brody (Longmans, 1932). A good local story about Detroit automobile workers.

"Forgotten Frontiers," by Dorothy Dudley (H. Smith, 1932). A profound factual and atmospheric study of the origins of Dreiser's work and the Chicago and Indiana background of our writing during the first fifteen years of the century.

"The American Jitters" (Scribner's, 1932). Edmund Wilson's compendium of a year's reporting that has, besides a great deal of valuable information, some magnificent writing in it, the description of Hollywood architecture and the lyrical account of the Coronado Beach Hotel.

"The Disinherited," by Jack Conroy (Covici, 1933). A springy lively narrative of the coming of age of a coal miner's son—as absolutely out of the soil and roads and garages and backhouses of these United States as Jack London's good early stuff.

Sinclair Lewis writes from Bermuda to recommend nine books, only one of which, incidentally, occurs on Dos Passos's list. "All of the following," Lewis says, "have received more or less critical attention and had a certain amount of sale, but none of them anything like what they have deserved":

"Karl and the Twentieth Century," by Rudolf Brunngraber (Morrow, 1933). A novel which symbolizes the whole collapse since 1914 in the person of the little man in the street.

"Dynamite," by Louis Adamic (Viking, 1931). That this should not have a huge sale is a disgrace to the entire country. No book has so well explained why the American labor movement has been so violent, why in so many ways it has been so futile, and why racketeering in general has arisen.

"Nobody Starves," by Catherine Brody. A story of the depression without romance—because it is too authentic to need "romance."

"The Child Manuela," by Christa Winsloe (Knopf, 1931). Upon one or two chapters of the original plan of this novel was based the famous film "Mädchen in Uniform." For some mysterious reason, though it had fair acclaim, it did not, in America—though it did in England—begin to have the enormous success of that film.

"The Human Body," "The Care and Feeding of Adults" and "Behind the Doctor" (all published by Knopf). A popular anatomy, a popular physiology and a popular history of medicine by Dr. Logan Clendenning. The amazing combination of racy and amusing stories with profound experience and a good sense that refuses to yield to fads in all these books should have made them necessities for every household, and yet their sales have been only reasonably large.

"The Glastonbury Romance," by John Cowper Powys (Simon and Schuster, 1933). Like Mr. Powys's "Wolf Solent," this is an authentic drama of the human soul with a curiously detached observation of innumerable little details of the background against which that soul plays out its destiny.

"Night Over Fitch's Pond," by Cora Jarrett (Houghton Mifflin, 1933). A novel which contrives to combine the suspense of a good detective story with the dignity of a psychological novel.

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Edmund Wilson has only one suggestion, "The Five Seasons," by Phelps Putnam (Scribner's, 1931), "certainly one of the best recent books of poems. I can't seem to think of any others," Wilson adds, "though there must be some. I agree with your selections.—By the way, Bill Rollins' book, 'The Shadow Before,' seems to me the best American industrial novel I have ever read." Wilson is one of half a dozen people I know who have read "The Shadow Before" (published last month by McBride) and all of them are enthusiastic about it.

Clara G. Stillman writes that for some reason she can't think of many good recent books that have been overlooked. "I might suggest Max Nomad's 'Rebels and Renegades' (Macmillan, 1932), Elizabeth Sprigge's 'The Old Man Dies' (Macmillan, 1933), Robert Cantwell's 'Laugh and Lie Down,' Catherine Macdonald Maclean's 'Dorothy Wordsworth' (Viking, 1932). I might have said 'Flowering Judas' if you hadn't first." But that was no bar against anybody else's mentioning "Flowering Judas." It is a volume of amazingly sensitive short stories by Katherine Anne Porter, which Harcourt, Brace published in 1930 in a limited edition of 1,000 copies. Within a week after publication, the edition was exhausted. It seems to me that a book containing these stories and others by the same author might now be issued for the general public.

But I don't want to steal space from our correspondents. "Any list that I can think of," John Chamberlain says, "would begin with Katherine Anne Porter's book. I'd also like to rake up Howard Baker's 'Orange Valley' (Coward-McCann, 1931). How about Constance Rourke's 'American Humor'? This is about all I can remember."

Isidor Schneider sends in an unusual list that reveals the diversity of his interests. "These books," he says, "have either not received the attention they deserve or, although well greeted in their season, never had any real circulation":

> "The Jungle Tide," by John Sill (Houghton, 1930). A British naturalist describes the forests of Ceylon. Apart from the textural beauty of the writing, the quietly dramatic quality of the narrative made everything in it exciting, but for some reason the description of the road-making in the jungle by monkeys and other animals remains most vivid in my mind.
>
> "Brief History of Russia," by Pokrovsky (International, 1933). As the most thoroughgoing application of the Marxian dialectic that has yet been made in the writing of a national history, Pokrovsky's book is of great value. I am sure it will become a landmark.
>
> "Imperialism, and The State and Revolution," by V. I. Lenin (Vanguard, 1927). This profound piece of research and generalization incorporates Lenin's development of Marxism to cover the imperialist stage of capitalism, and is a presentation of the greatest history-making ideas of our time. It seems incredible that its circulation should be so small.
>
> "Chaka," by Mofolo (Oxford, 1931). An African Negro of extraordinarily rich literary powers writes a fervid historical novel based on the career of Chaka, builder of the Zulu empire. The book was scarcely even reviewed.
>
> "History of Italian Literature," by De Sanctis (Harcourt, 1932). This book, written with passion as well as with patient scholarship, and in beautiful prose, deserves to be in the libraries of everybody interested in literature, rather than in the few academic libraries to which I am afraid it has been relegated.
>
> "The Cannery Boat," by Takiji Kobayashi and others (International, 1933). I am told that many readers are looking about for good examples of proletarian literature. Here is something they have missed.

Schneider also mentions "Leninism," by Joseph Stalin (International, 1933), "The Memoirs of Glückel of Hameln" (Harpers, 1932). "The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins" (Oxford, 1930) and "To Make My Bread," by Grace Lumpkin (Macaulay, 1932). I wish there were space for all his comments.

Suzanne La Follette writes that "The only book I think of at the moment which seems to me to have been much too lightly dismissed—not by The New Republic, let me hasten to say—is 'The Little Golden Calf,' by Ilf and Petroff (Farrar, 1932). I take this quite personally, because so few people even know about it that I rarely find anyone who can laugh over it with me. It is magnificent satire, and satire which leaves one feeling that Russia is a pretty swell place. Moreover it is more amusing from first to last than anything I've read in a decade."

Thornton Wilder thinks that running a list of neglected books "is a fine idea; but I can't think of any more except the Keyserling 'Meditations on South America,' and I don't even know whether that was published in the United States." It was published here by Harpers in 1932, and had a very bad press. "The Lawrence letters got their share," he continues. "I'm a little surprised at myself for not discovering any more disinterested enthusiasms in this realm, but I guess my successive jobs have undermined my literary and scouting evangelisms."

Horace Gregory, on the other hand, finds several books to mention. He begins with a novel and with three collections of short stories (which, good or bad, are almost always neglected):

> "Saturday Night at the Greyhound," by John Hampson (Knopf, 1931). A study of disintegration in English lower-middle-class society, tracing the decline of a family that ran a public house. It's a book that should be read by young novelists who lack a sense of dramatic structure.
>
> "Guardian Angel," by Margery Latimer (H. Smith, 1932). An unusual book of short stories that was rapidly lost sight of largely because its author, like Hart Crane, died at the wrong moment.
>
> "The Black Boxer," by H. E. Bates (Cape, 1932). A collection of stories written by a young Englishman who represents practically the same quality that Katherine Anne Porter displays. He has a good sense of form and utilizes it effectively.
>
> "Ideals," by Evelyn Scott (Boni, 1927), is a bit older than the time limit you set, but I think it represents one of the high points in Mrs. Scott's career. I've never forgotten her study of a small-town bank clerk whose daughter ran off with an Italian chauffeur.

"As for biography," he continues, "Ethel Colburne Mayne's 'Life of Byron' (Scribner's, 1925) has never reached the people who should read it. Maurois's Byron was a cheap rehash of the same material. Another book that has had the same fate is Violet Hunt's wild but original 'Wife of Rossetti' (Dutton, 1932). In this case the book was overshadowed by 'Poor Splendid Wings,' a sensational, insensitive would-be history of the Rossetti circle.

"Poetry, I think, is a rather special case. . . . I consider my 'No Retreat' (Harcourt, 1933) a lost cause, for the book sold very, very badly—something like two hundred copies—and I doubt if it will ever leave the publisher's shelves until it's dumped on the market. I feel that Allen

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Tate's 'Poems: 1928-1931' (Scribner's) never made its way. You know that I violently disagree with most of Tate's opinions, but I hate to see good poetry neglected. The same is true of Wallace Stevens' 'Harmonium' in its definitive edition (Knopf, 1931). The same is true of Larsson's 'O City Cities' (Harcourt, 1929). Larsson has an ear, and is a lyric poet of limited but definite range. Your mention of Hart Crane completes the list."

F. Scott Fitzgerald has just finished a book of his own, "Tender Is the Night," his first novel since 1925. From Baltimore he sends a list of "the books that seem to me to have cashed in least on their intrinsic worth in recent years":

"Miss Lonelyhearts," by Nathanael West (Liveright, 1933)—though it's really a long short story.

"Sing Before Breakfast," by Vincent McHugh (Simon and Schuster, 1933).

"I Thought of Daisy," by Edmund Wilson (Scribner's, 1927).

"Through the Wheat," by Thomas Boyd (Scribner's, 1927).

He also mentions "a book called 'Spring Flight,' by whom I've forgotten—he never appeared again," and "the detective stories of Raoul Whitfield, who I think is as good as Hammett—in fact I once suspected he was Hammett under another name." We could find no trace of "Spring Flight" or its author—perhaps Fitzgerald remembered the wrong title. As for Raoul Whitfield's detective stories, most of them are published by Knopf, and "Danger Circus," which appeared last year, is the most recent.

"There are probably other neglected books," Fitzgerald continues, "but these occur to me especially. When the most violent emotional hysteria takes place over any rehash of Lenin's 'Imperialism,' any story about a steel mill made out of the dry bones of Upton Sinclair and Jack London, or any version of Hamsun's 'Growth of the Soil,' I think the novels above certainly deserve a second reading. In each case they are the men who did it first and that means a lot to me in my valuation of people's artistic merit. . . . Meanwhile I am waiting for the crash down on 'Tender Is the Night.' I expect a lot of good pokes from the wise boys for not having written the Odyssey."

T. S. Matthews, the literary editor of Time, gives a list of nine books, mostly novels, that is noteworthy for including not a single title mentioned in any other list:

"The Way of Sacrifice," by Fritz von Unruh (Knopf, 1928). The story of a storm troop before Verdun written by a Junker and suppressed by the General Staff. A wild and extraordinary book.

"The Devil," by Alfred Neumann (Knopf, 1928). Scott's "Quentin Durward" retold. The most morbidly powerful historical novel I remember reading.

"Anarchism Is Not Enough," essays by Laura Riding (Doubleday, 1928). You're quite wrong about L. R., and I hereby threaten to write a piece to prove it.

"War," by Ludwig Renn (Dodd, Mead, 1929). More complete, more impersonal account of the German soldier's side of the War than "All Quiet."

"— & Co.," by Jean-Richard Bloch (Simon and Schuster, 1930). A novel on a grand scale of a Jewish industrial family in Alsace, late nineteenth century.

"Sleeveless Errand," by Norah C. James (Morrow, 1929). A story of post-war London; one of the few convincing suicide stories I remember.

"The Martial Spirit," by Walter Millis (Houghton, 1931). The Spanish-American War as a case history.

"Greenbanks," by Dorothy Whipple (Farrar, 1932). A middle-class English novel so damn well done it reminds you of Chekhov.

"Solal," by Albert Cohen (Dutton, 1933). A novel by a French Jew about one of the same who ran the goy gamut and relapsed into Jewish sainthood. This is a wild melange of various kinds of writing, but either it's a good book or I'm crazy.

I have saved Conrad Aiken for the last, largely because of a personal comment he makes at the end of his letter. He begins by saying, "I think your idea of a list of Neglected Opera is a swell one—but so far the only thing that has occurred to me is Kafka's 'The Castle,' translated by Edwin and Willa Muir (Knopf, 1930), which in my opinion is a masterpiece—a queer, dreamlike, but intensely real and subtle psychological allegory, unlike anything I've ever read—one of the really unique things I've encountered in my life. I don't think it sold at all, and I've seen only one or two tepid reviews—though I believe it was a *little* better received in England, and I think Kafka left two other books when he died, now also published in England, but not here—I haven't read them. *All* his work was posthumously published."

Then comes the comment to which I referred. "Might I also suggest for your list of Neglected Books a novel by c. aiken called 'Great Circle,' of which the royalty report, to hand this morning, chronicles a sale of twenty-six copies in its second half-year? And 'Preludes for Memnon,' which I think is my best book, and which has sold about seven hundred copies in three years. It got no intelligent review, either. It makes me mad that this should have been neglected in favor of my 'Selected Poems,' which is mostly early work, simply because that got the Pulitzer Prize. Where the hell is American criticism?"

American criticism is where you find it, in the metropolitan dailies, in the weekly book sections, in the highbrow monthly magazines sandwiched between advertisements. It is, on the whole, much better than it was ten years ago. If you don't believe this, turn back to any magazine or Sunday newspaper printed just after the War and see (with a few honorable exceptions, The Dial, The New Republic, The Freeman) how immature and provincial most of the critical writing was. Today there are several periodicals that print good reviews. But criticism is more and more being faced with an almost impossible task. It has to be *timely*, it has to evaluate thousands of books during the month, the week, and preferably on the very day of their first appearance. It therefore inclines to be undiscriminating, timid, too lenient toward bad books and not appreciative enough of the good ones—many of which, as the foregoing lists abundantly prove, have been wrapped about with a few perfunctory praises and allowed to go down the chute into oblivion.

American criticism ought to be given a chance, too, for sober second judgment of the books that deserve it.

M. C.

Some other comments on the good books that have fallen into neglect, including lists from Newton Arvin, Harry Hansen and Clifton Fadiman, will be printed in an early issue.—THE EDITORS.

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Truth and Some New Fictions

Village Tale, by Phil Stong. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.

The Fool of Venus, by George Cronyn. New York: Covici-Friede. $3.

Smirt, by Branch Cabell. New York: Robert M. McBride and Company. $2.50.

Anitra's Dance, by Fannie Hurst. New York: Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

Long Remember, by MacKinlay Kantor. New York: Coward-McCann. $2.50.

Magnus Merriman, by Eric Linklater. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.

IN ONE of Van Wyck Brooks's essays he speaks of the great danger which besets the path of the American writer—the danger that, having discovered the trick of getting published, he will then be irresistibly tempted to cash in on his knowledge, and give up trying to become a better writer. "And the worst of it is that precisely these writers of immitigable trash are often the bright, vigorous, intuitive souls who *could* make literature out of American life." To make his point, Mr. Brooks has exaggerated a little. It is not "immitigable trash" that these popular writers offer us, but falsity, and falsity must have some truth in it. And though I do not wish to accuse Mr. Brooks of being a highbrow—or (but perhaps he would not mind) an idealist—the plain fact is that literature is a continuous performance and is by no means confined to the star turns.

These six novels are not immitigable trash. It would be kinder, and also for once truer, to call them truth mitigated by fiction.

Mr. Stong is a good example of what Mr. Brooks means by a young American writer going wrong. His first novel, "State Fair," a fresh and hearty story of his native Iowa, roused the tireless hopes of the critics; his second made their eyebrows go up; and now with "Village Tale" he is seen to be heading straight for the primrose path that leads to Hollywood. "Village Tale" is a melodrama dedicated to the proposition that yokels are just as wicked as city fellers, if the truth were known. The village villain is as pathological a specimen as a Chicago gunman, and the hero as improbable as a district attorney in full cry. Two brutal fights, a suicide and a legal murder round off this emphatically racy tale. Bereft of Mr. Stong's robustiousness and Hollywatered down with a little milk and honey, it should make a good movie.

And what a chance to make Cecil B. de Millions out of another recent novel, "The Fool of Venus"! "Quick! you fornicating wench! Fetch us a stoup of strong wine!" It has the authentic hollow wooden Hollyring about it. Jongleurs, crusaders, donjons, keeps, troubadours and tournaments of love—and all out of history books, except perhaps some of the love scenes, where the author's shocking imagination seems to have run away with him. What a mass of material, and what a dead waste of it! This groaning mountain of instructive facts hardly brings to light one little mouse of artistic truth.

Of Maestro Cabell I have a small but not ever ending complainment to make. Whensoever, or perhaps in the while, I regard the celluloid tower he has builded for what he might call an unique inhabitancy, it arouses my not ever ending wonderment.—Cabell's Folly is a landmark that is by now very well known, for Mr. Cabell has given us dozens of views of it—all different views, according to him, but all looking desperately alike. The latest version he calls "Smirt," and somewhat tautologically subtitles it "An Urbane Nightmare." It is Jurgen, or Mr. Cabell, or somebody else of the same name, going through the usual Jurgenesque peregrinations; this time the author calls it a dream. In spite of Mr. Cabell's insistence on it, there is no doubt at all that he is urbane: he probably stands at the head of the American class in urbanity, and though he is not quite the monstrous clever fellow he makes out, he does bring home good reports in composition. Mr. Cabell is well aware of his ability to annoy the bourgeois public, and gets what fun he can out of writing with his tongue in his cheek—a rather cramped attitude for a serious writer—but though he admits that his critics consider his style "hopelessly artificial and over ornamented and self-conscious" he himself prefers to think of it as "romantic irony." But there is something worse the matter with Mr. Cabell's style than self-consciousness and artificiality (neither of which, as he implies, is a fault in itself): Mr. Cabell is a snob, and an American snob is almost a traitor to his country.

When Fannie Hurst comes up for discussion it is hard to avoid being ribald, but remembering the stand we have taken against Mr. Brooks's absolutism, we should avoid it. To do her justice, Miss Hurst should really be reviewed in an animated cartoon, a Silly Symphony; reasonable words are hardly enough to reflect her indefatigable zest. She encounters the same difficulty herself; witness one of the opening paragraphs of "Anitra's Dance": "The world wagged. Sophie wagged. Waxman wagged. How furiously it all wagged and wagged." And every now and then she deserts words entirely and runs in a line of musical notation. Fannie Hurst's writing is vulgar, sentimental and tasteless, but it cloaks a vitality that is constantly trying to get its teeth into the heart of the matter. That she always bites off more than she can chew is, in a way, an admirable fault. "Anitra's Dance" is the story of a musical genius in the bosom of his very ordinary and squabbling family. The only one who has inherited his spark is his youngest daughter, Anitra, the child of his old age; she has the imagination to see the situation and the character to take charge of it. When everything is satisfactorily ironed out and Anitra has acquired a rising young genius for herself, she comes to what is intended as an extremely affecting end. Actually the story has simply floundered to an arbitrary finish, a bowdlerization of tragedy which Miss Hurst hopes will deserve the reader's tears. It is a depressing—and not really laughable—sight to see all that energy hitched up to such a merry-go-round.

It bears witness to the power of our nationalist education that the two words "Long Remember" immediately conjure up, in the mind of anyone who has once been an American schoolboy, the Gettysburg Address. As the title indicates, the book is a story of the battle. Mr. Kantor attempts to give a non-partisan account by making his hero a native of Gettysburg but a pacifist. This expedient may not seem too implausible, but in order to have his eyewitness present at most of the crucial events of the three-day battle he has to stretch the probabilities to a breaking point. The setting of the scene—the hero's return from the West to

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The Robber Barons
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The America-France Award Novel, illustrated by Rockwell Kent. "This distinguished sea story . . . is a work possessing the biting drive and force of its own Arctic sea gales. It should become memorable for its beauty and power, to all who love sincere romantic realism."—*Saturday Review.* $2.50

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his sleepy little home town—is a first-rate job, and in spite of a love affair which complicates without adding to the suspense, the first stages of the battle are described with a homely vividness that makes the story come true. But by the time our civilian hero finds himself wedged among the infantry in Meade's center, waiting for Pickett's charge, Mr. Kantor has worked up to a welter of impressionistic violence that ends by tiring and confusing the reader. Still, though "Long Remember" is not the best story that could be written about Gettysburg, it is one of the best that has been, and it is a heartening contrast to Mr. Cronyn's fake drums and tramplings.

Mr. Brooks's remark about the surrendering American writer does not really apply to Eric Linklater, who is a Britisher and as such exempt from surrender; but Mr. Linklater's "Juan in America," a satirical bread-and-butter letter for his American visit, might be said to qualify him as one of the boys. His "Magnus Merriman" has been the best-seller in England, topping even its alliterative rival, "Anthony Adverse"—and it certainly is a much neater, if much less ambitious performance. "Magnus Merriman" is a very Tory book; in spots it is also very funny. His picaresque hero, like all good Scots, breathes a natural scorn of England, but he is British to the bone. He tries the literary life in London, politics in Scotland, rural dalliance in his native Orkney, but the only thing of which he makes an unqualified success is drunken arguments in pubs, in which he invariably upholds the honor of Shakespeare. Eventually he sees the error of all ways but the old ways, and settles down on a farm with a shrewish wife, to raise a family and write a few good books.

Mr. Linklater's apparently sturdy but really rather wobbly position is right-center: he deprecates the present "pale and nerveless" condition of "conventional writing," and does his bit to remedy the matter. No wonder his book has been so popular in England. What satirical indignation there is behind it has not burnt the author up, as we say, nor will it blister the most thin-skinned Tory reader. The worst that can be said of his book is that it is amusing. I think Mr. Linklater means to be a serious writer, but his good-humored lack of conviction—or perhaps it is his conservative instincts—will keep popping up, to mitigate his angry truths with all-too-popular fiction.

T. S. Matthews.

Worth Reprinting

SOME PUBLISHING enterprises, especially new series of reprints, are occasions for analyzing the problems of book marketing rather than occasions for literary reviews or reappraisals. Such a venture is the new White Oak Library, the title for which occurred to the publisher while clearing some Connecticut woodland. White oak trees, he found, were both tough and long-lived. The first four volumes in the series issued this spring were "Art in America" by Suzanne La Follette, "Sticks and Stones" and "The Golden Day" by Lewis Mumford and "The Meaning of a Liberal Education" by Everett Dean Martin. Santayana's "Character and Opinion in the United States" is next to come.

The White Oak Library differs from most reprint ventures in the fact that its titles cannot possibly be sold to large audiences, while the usual reprint is only made possible by large printings. In the case of 75-cent fiction, of which so many million copies have been sold, a market of from 10,000 to 50,000 copies is essential to give the author a reasonable return at five cents a copy. The original publisher receives a similar amount for the use of the plates. In the case of non-fiction, a popular distribution for which has been found in recent years through the ubiquitous $1 counters, there must be a market for at least 5,000 copies in a printing. (Wells' "Outline" went to over half a million.)

In agreeing to reprint editions the author accepts a royalty of what may be one-sixth to one-tenth of the amount per copy which he receives on an original edition. If original editions were to be marketed at the price of the reprints, the author's income would be altogether too small and the cost of the investment in plates could not be met.

But besides current books of the type included in the reprints mentioned, there are many books of literary and cultural interest for which no market of sufficient extent exists to justify printings as large as 5,000 but for which a small but continuing group of readers can be found if the books are kept available. It was the need of keeping this sort of book alive that suggested the White Oak Library. The two Mumford books, for example, cannot be "merchandised" in the manner effective for "The Story of Philosophy," to mention one outstanding $1 reprint. Merchandising methods will not increase the number of potential readers of the White Oak Library books, and, unless the public takes some initiative in its own hands and gives support to books of this type, they must sink into the realm of the out-of-print and difficult-to-obtain.

Mr. Norton has chosen his first titles carefully. He has also measured his production costs so closely that if the entire 2,000 copies of each volume at $2 a copy can be sold, the series will be an example of worth-while though not highly profitable publishing. That such undertakings should be successful is important, and those who pass the word along about such books will help keep in print at a popular price these and other significant titles.

Frederic G. Melcher.

Statesmen on Parade

Lord Riddell's Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and After: 1918-23. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock. 447 pages. $3.75.

LORD Riddell's diary is a rambling, scrambling book, precisely the sort of thing one might expect from a famous newspaper proprietor who thinks Arthur Brisbane "a wonderful writer" and whose News of the World has long been famous for pungent gossip more entertaining than edifying. As friend or acquaintance of most of the major figures in British politics, Lord Riddell naturally has an interesting story to tell and, having managed British press relations at important international conferences for several years, he is in a position to know a good many unholy things. Unfortunately he has carefully refrained from telling most of them. Probably the nearest thing to a genuine "revelation" is the news that the American proposals for scrapping battleships with which Charles Evans Hughes, as Secretary of State, dumbfounded the Washington Conference in 1922, had not been kept quite so secret as Americans fancied. The Hughes speech has always been represented as a complete surprise to everybody. Lord Riddell now asserts that "most of us knew he was going to say something startling." As nothing could possibly startle a disarmament conference except a proposal to disarm, this is equivalent to asserting that Britain's ubiquitous press agent had a pretty fair idea of the American proposals before they were made.

Otherwise, the value of the book lies in its intimate, day-

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„גייט צום מיוזעל
"אויף א פיינעם אופן"

says

DON MARQUIS

to

The Saturday Review

of LITERATURE

A severe catechism, no doubt, but read Mr. Marquis's letter:

To the Editor of the Saturday Review:

SIR: I have a serious complaint to make of **The Saturday Review of Literature.** It is not pedantic enough. It is not academic enough. What I want in a literary review is more the point of view of the learned pundit. As far as humanity is concerned, I can supply that myself. When I formulate for myself a literary opinion, I need a review which will contain words and phrases from which I can select a verbal costume, which will cover my ideas with the dress of authority. **The Saturday Review of Literature** seems to think that literature has some connection with life, and that almost anyone may have his opinion of it. I want a review with more weighty traditions, and more classical quotations in it. I consider **The Saturday Review** a dangerous precedent in reviews. People are able to understand what its writers publish; even people who do not use Ph.D., LL.D., and S.O.S. after their names. When I can comprehend everything in a review, I know that it has deserted the ancient cultural standards. I should like to know where you think the ancient landmarks are, and point out to you that the rapids are before you; and ask you, Whither Are You Drifting? Can't you get a little Greek type, or some of these Hebrew letters which look like false teeth, and sprinkle them through your pages? If I were to write a book, and it were disapproved of by a reviewer who did not use some classical quotations here and there, I would not feel rebuked at all. In fact, I once did write a book, and a fellow made a wise-crack in Sanskrit about it; and I never wrote another book, so you see learning does do some good in a review. I should think you would have in your offices one of those big dictionaries which have a lot of classical quotations in the back of them, and that you could dig out enough to look classical, even if you don't feel that way. You may think I am an isolated case, but there are thousands of other readers of yours, who are just practically going to hell, in a cultural way, on account of your lax policies.

Don Marquis

DO you agree with what Mr. Marquis says, or with what he **means?** If you want a literary review which is pedantic and not too easy to understand, then be warned. **The Saturday Review of Literature** is not for you. But, if you "think that literature has some connection with life," if you want to keep posted on all the latest news of books and publishing, if the idea of an illustrated, literary weekly, with an editorial staff including Henry Seidel Canby, Amy Loveman, George Stevens, William Rose Benét, and Christopher Morley, appeals to you, then, perhaps you should join us in perpetuating what Mr. Marquis considers such an egregious editorial error. Then, you will subscribe to **The Saturday Review.**

If you have been a reader of The Saturday Review *during the past six months, you would have enjoyed the contributions from:*

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CHARLES A. BEARD
PEARL S. BUCK
ELMER DAVIS
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FORD MADOX FORD
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by-day picture of statesmen off parade, and in their casually expressed opinions of one another. Discussing Clemenceau, Lloyd George remarks that he "had to go for the old boy" during the Peace Conference because "if he thought you were afraid of him he would ride roughshod over you." Lloyd George and Clemenceau both toyed with ivory paper knives during Brockdorff-Rantzau's protest against the Treaty of Versailles, but "the old boy" contented himself with tapping the table, whereas the infuriated Lloyd George snapped his paper knife in two. On the other hand, it was Clemenceau who, when forced to shake hands with a German delegate, remarked: "I spat on the place in order to commemorate it."

Lloyd George felt sure that "Wilson would occupy a great place in history," but of his letter demanding Lansing's resignation as Secretary of State he observed: "If you find me writing letters like that, I hope you will lock me up." It is refreshing to find the Welsh Wizard an advocate of deep-breathing exercises, and a tremendous singer of Welsh hymns, oratorio selections, serenades for his daughter Megan, and a less edifying ditty entitled "Cockles and Mussels."

There are numerous highly personal glimpses of Marshal Foch, the most highly personal being Lord Riddell's measurements of his hat—7½ inches long by 6⅜ inches wide. Though Foch claimed to have won the War "by smoking my pipe," he had a terrible time lighting it, on one occasion first waiting for the wind to die down, then trying the shelter of Lord Riddell's hat, next the shelter of a wall, and finally succeeding behind Philip Kerr's coat. Otherwise, the Marshal appears as an honest patriot, mainly concerned with circumventing for all time the future wiles of the terrible Boche.

The book is entirely made up of such personal tittle-tattle. It will not compel historians to revise their opinions of anything in particular, but it will give the reader a cheerfully cynical view of the way the world wags.

JOHN BAKELESS.

The Second British Empire

A Political Geography of the British Empire, by C. B. Fawcett. New York: Ginn and Company. 422 pages. $4.50.

THIS IS a careful, cautious and fairly exhaustive study of the geographical basis of the British Empire, together with the political implications of the facts assembled. It is posited upon the proposition that while the political forms are in process of change and the economic organization is subject to change, the Empire will survive as one of the three great governmental systems in the world, the other two being the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A.

What Professor Fawcett has undertaken to describe is, of course, the Second British Empire, the outstanding characteristic of which in geographic terms is the "discontinuity of its lands." It has, consequently, grown most rapidly since the coming of the steamboat. It lies chiefly in the New World and, as the years pass, the vital impulses increasingly come from the countries of the New World rather than from Great Britain. He begins his book by noting that two forces are complicating the problem of governing so scattered an empire: economic nationalism and the slowing down of population growth.

With the exception of India, the Empire is very thinly settled and many divisions of it are strongly tempting to excluded peoples in overcrowded countries: "The mean density of the population over all the rest of its lands is less than a third of the mean world density." An enormous number of people live within it, in spite of the half-empty territories it contains, but they fall into two divisions, with the citizen divisions by far the smallest, forming barely a seventh of the total population. This is the ruling class, and it is further reduced by the class stratifications that divide it. All in all, Professor Fawcett by the very quality of cautiousness has provided the materials for understanding an empire on which the sun still hasn't set.

C. HARTLEY GRATTAN.

Conspiring for Status Quo

Just Plain Larnin', by James M. Shields. New York: Coward-McCann. $2.

WALTER PAGE, as editor, used to say that education is decidedly interesting, but when an educator tries to write about it he wraps it in a wet blanket.

Young schoolmaster Shields doesn't. He tells a holding story of real folks in a manufacturing city of the South. They mush through the same stupidities that I knew in every Northern town that allowed me to work there. They find that a young chap is letting the high-school students discuss the relations of capital and labor; they frame against him the usual deadly charge of improper relations with a woman. As in plenty of localities in every state, the greatest obstacle to education in Nugget City is its Board of Education. It has the good old fear of everything different from what its members had when they were boys. The school principals spend their time keeping the educational mill grinding and have little knowledge or concern about the product. The superintendent plays at being a business man. A schoolmaster infected with Deweyism fires his school with enthusiasm for life and gets himself put on the carpet. "Public-school people," he shoots at advisers for conformity, "are always taking it on the chin. Education will stay in the past until they take the offensive. We know what a rut schooling is in, but we hem and haw and play for safety first. What this country needs from education is attack, not defense." The school board fires him.

Young Mr. Shields' story is not halted by propaganda. His people are alive. There are adventure, thrill and climax. It is a moving tale. But from it you cannot fail to realize the tragic effect of American school-board administration, turning teachers into second-raters, holding them in tracks laid down generations ago, assuring them that the matter of continued employment will depend in no wise on whether their schools are better than the ordinary or not. In the past twenty years hundreds of careful researchers have devised and improved ways of determining how good a class, or school, or a city educational system is. A superintendent may have an unbroken set of facts showing the highest percent of success by his children in all the abilities the board's approved course of study proposed they should have, but if, like Dietz, of the Boise, Idaho, schools, he makes a report showing how the school endowments have been milked by predatory interests, the lumbermen, the mining companies and the bankers will get him. Ask the school board, "Aren't Dietz's schools run on a high grade?" "Maybe, but we think it is time we had a change. A superintendent ought not to be too long in one place."

Away back when we started this Republic, the statesmen of the day, from Washington down, insisted that "A government deriving its force from public opinion should have a system of schools so that public opinion shall be enlight-

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ened." In Nugget City any teacher who attempted enlightenment on the purposes of government—liberty, equality, happiness, justice, general welfare—was called off. New York City schools spend much time on "community civics" and none on how their own city is governed. No school heard mention of the Seabury disclosures. You read Shields' novel and exclaim of the Nugget City high school. "What a travesty!" How is it in your town?

WILLIAM MCANDREW.

A Spotlight on the South

Culture in the South, edited by W. T. Couch. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 725 pages. $4

THIS SYMPOSIUM, in which thirty-one economists, sociologists, educators, artists and writers examine as many different aspects of the contemporary Southern scene, is probably the best non-fiction book on the South that has yet appeared. Hardly a phase of Southern life is left unnoticed. The contributors are all more than competent and some of them are writers of considerable distinction.

One is not always in agreement with the statements and implications contained in these pages, but in only a relatively few instances does the quarrel become general. It arises, when it does, from the assumption on the part of a contributor that the South, by virtue of climate, geography and an agricultural past, possesses a character so very native, so highly valuable in itself, as to render any contact with the outside world, except superficially, extremely inadvisable if not downright dangerous. There is required for the preservation of this character, as well as its future growth, a self-isolation, a turning inward in place and backward in time; a movement, as Mr. Donald Davidson puts it, toward self-determination, a returning to native (as opposed to worldly or American) sources.

In his essay on "The Trend of Literature" Mr. Davidson restates, in a general way, some of the affirmations contained in an earlier Southern anthology, "I'll Take My Stand," a book which immediately suggests itself for comparison with "Culture in the South." The broad thesis of "I'll Take My Stand," it will be remembered, is that agrarianism, as a way of life, is better than industrialism, and that the South, if it wishes to recapture the richness of its past, must return to an agricultural order modeled upon the plantation economy of 1860.

The present volume, at least in most of the essays, expresses a different and more realistic point of view. It lacks unanimity of opinion, but by and large it is only slightly afflicted with the nostalgia that made "I'll Take My Stand" so much of a prose-poem to the past. It takes into consideration, which "I'll Take My Stand" did not, the defects and cruelties of the old order and it declares, at the risk of being obvious, that self-determination, in its larger and more important sense, is impossible. Time, after all, does make a difference. So does economics. Together they have accomplished what war and persecution could not. Whether we like it or not, the South has become a part of the United States. The future of the one depends on the future of the other. Rugged individualism is gone.

And what, asks Mr. Broadus Mitchell in "A Survey of Industry," was the Old South really like? Not from the position of the privileged and powerful, but of the ordinary man—the neglected figure of the Southern tradition:

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> If it [the Old South] had drawbacks in general illiteracy, lack of inventiveness, absence of economic incentive and the banishing of political democracy, these were minor debits. The great fact was that we developed "culture." If we did, it was so elusive that the observer today cannot find it. It did not take form in music, poetry, prose, building, works of engineering, jurisprudence, science or theology, let alone the infinitely more difficult matter of decent human comfort and independence for the average man within the South. A staple agriculture with slave labor gave us only exploitation—cunning, suave, inveterate.

It is not to be supposed that the book is composed entirely of such heretical statements as this. Many others, however, are equally untraditional. Editor Couch, in his preface, dissects the agrarian allegory with a sharp and ruthless knife and also contributes an excellent study of the Negro. Mr. Clarence E. Cason's "Middle Class and Bourbon" is a piece of rollicking satire and Mr. H. C. Brearley writes a grim paper on one of the South's distinguishing characteristics—its violence.

One cannot, in a brief review, give each essay the consideration it deserves. It can only be said that each contributes its share of important, interesting and authentic information. Mr. Couch, who conceived the book and brought it to its final development, is to be congratulated. "Culture in the South" is a book which should be put on the required reading list of all persons professing even a remote interest in the contemporary South.

HAMILTON BASSO.

The Christian Realist

Reflections on the End of an Era, by Reinhold Niebuhr. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 302 pages. $2.

REINHOLD NIEBUHR'S method in these related essays is to compare prevailing attitudes and tendencies and, by analogy and differentiation, to discriminate their relations and functions. Thus there emerges a series of nicely balanced ratios between reason and impulse, religion and politics, mythology and history, individualism and collectivism, liberalism and radicalism, democracy and revolution, Christianity and Communism. Mr. Niebuhr may be described as a Christian realist who sees clearly and appraises justly, giving its due weight to each of the two elements by which human fate is determined, nature and spirit.

An evidence of Mr. Niebuhr's impartiality is his admission that religion alone cannot save the world. Indeed, Christianity by its tendency to acquiesce in an established order of social injustice has contributed to the evil plight of mankind. He sees capitalism as doomed by the contradictions within itself and collectivism as inevitable in an economy determined by abundance, such a development to result from action of a proletariat hitherto deprived of the just rewards of its industry. This revolution will not be brought about by the technique of democracy, which can operate only within the frame of a given social and political order. It is not to be expected that the class holding privilege and power will abandon them without a struggle. Liberal democracy, however, will be able to prepare the minds of men for the change, and to mitigate the violence attending it. It may actually contribute to the revolution by bringing to the support of the disinherited masses a body of neutral and disinterested public opinion without which their revolt can scarcely succeed.

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Mr. Niebuhr therefore deprecates the tendency of radical revolutionists to alienate such support by insisting on a complete break with the cultural inheritance of the past, particularly with religion. In his view, both Christianity and Marxism are religious in seeking an ultimate goal that gives meaning to the historical process. The immediate task belongs to Marxism in removing the obstacles in the political field to the achievement of social justice, but its success will always be incomplete in a dual world of nature and spirit. An approximation is possible only by "the experience of grace," which Mr. Niebuhr defines as "the apprehension of the absolute from the perspective of the relative." Such a concept of the absolute is a spiritual demand which will assert itself again and more forcibly when "modern civilization has achieved a social system which provides some basic justice compatible with the necessities of a technical age."

Not all readers will follow Mr. Niebuhr in his theology, but few will fail to find his social criticism both clarifying and exciting, the product of a candid mind and vigorous, forthright thinking. The future historian will regard these "Reflections," like the earlier "Moral Man and Immoral Society," as characteristic utterances upon an epoch of confusion and decay, significant if not prophetic.

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT.

The Well Worn Spirit

Collected Poems: 1921-1931, by William Carlos Williams. Preface by Wallace Stevens. New York: The Objectivist Press. 142 pages. $2.

IT WAS high time Williams gave us some sort of *omnium gatherum;* and the volume now published by The Objectivist Press does a good deal, though not everything, to fill the gap—it is a good collection, but not, I think, the best possible; and if it is enough to give the flavor of his delightful and peculiar genius (and to send the reader to the separate earlier books), nevertheless it does not, perhaps, give us his work at its finest and sharpest. That is a pity. One cannot but admire the cheerful integrity with which Williams has persistently and helpfully thrown in his lot with the "little" magazines, avoiding the organized ballyhoo of Big Time publishing; but this perverse honesty has had the unfortunate effect of restricting both his reputation and his influence. Too few people have read "Al Que Quiere," or "Kora in Hell"—they were obscurely published and poorly circulated; they are the best of Williams, and ought to be read; and their omission from the present collection, possibly owing to copyright difficulties, is much to be regretted. Perhaps, however, these early books will now be "discovered."

What strikes one afresh, in reading the "Collected Poems" (the work of the past decade) and in rereading the earlier books, is Williams' extraordinary consistency: from the outset he knew what he was about, knew what he wanted to do, and *why.* Like Eliot (who is in other respects his antithesis), he seems to have developed, simultaneously, a very individual style and a formidable critical awareness with which to defend it. Wallace Stevens, in a delightful preface to the present volume, analyzes something of this—he suggests slyly that Williams, despite his concern for the "antipoetic" and the real, is essentially a romantic—"the hermit who dwells alone with the sun and moon, but insists on taking a rotten newspaper." The sentimental underlies the antipoetic: the unreal underlies the real: the struggle, the energy, arises from the opposition. There is a good deal of truth in this. One has always the feeling

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about Williams that he *wants* to be more "poetic" than he is. With an extraordinary sense of the actual—whether tactile, olfactory or visual—and a passionate love for it, in all its humblest quotidian forms, nevertheless he is forever checking himself in mid-praise—he suddenly remembers that he must not say too much, but "be mostly silent"; the color must come out, the image must be bare, the rhythm be reduced almost to that of prose. What remains is certainly the "opacity" which Pound said to Williams "saves your work." But there is also a conscious avoidance of *completeness,* whether of statement or of form—and this is a very important part of Williams' theory—which looks like an inverted sentimentalism; and which certainly sometimes defeats his purpose.

About the theory, Williams is pretty explicit. In "Kora in Hell"—a book which contains some of the keenest and most delightful of *aperçus* on contemporary esthetic theory and practice—he observed acridly, fifteen years ago:

> It is to the inventive imagination that we look for deliverance from every other misfortune as from the desolation of a flat Hellenic perfection of style. . . . The true value is that peculiarity which gives an object a character by itself. . . . The imagination goes from one thing to another. Given many things of nearly totally divergent natures, but possessing one-thousandth part of a quality in common, provided that be new, distinguished, these things belong in an imaginative category and not in a gross natural array. To me this is the gist of the whole matter. . . . But the thing that stands eternally in the way of really good writing is always one: the virtual impossibility of lifting to the imagination those things which lie under the direct scrutiny of the senses, close to the nose.
>
> By the brokenness of his composition the poet makes himself master of a certain weapon which he could possess himself of in no other way. The speed of the emotions is sometimes such that . . . many matters are touched but not held, more often broken by the contact. . . . Thus a poem is tough by no quality it borrows from a logical recital of events nor from the events themselves but solely from that attenuated power which draws perhaps many broken things into a dance giving them thus full being.

Notice the *"flat Hellenic perfection of style"*—it is no wonder that Stevens said, "What strikes me most about the poems themselves is their casual character," or that he disliked their air as of a perpetual *beginningness!*

What Williams has been after, in short, is a rapid succession of images (things immediately apprehended by the senses) presented in naked succession, and in broken rhythm; with no strict or ordered development, nor luxurious elaboration at any given point; least of all, any literary "calculation." This was the theory: but actually, in practice, he has repeatedly, and happily, departed from it. In "History" and "The Wanderer" ("Al Que Quiere") there is every evidence of firm elaboration of form, and rich associational thinking, though both are long poems: as a result of which they are perhaps the best things Williams has done, and certainly among the best poems of our time. (*En passant,* it is interesting to speculate on the influence of the very subtle rhythms of "History" on the poetry of its period.) But there are also many shorter things almost as good—for the truth is, Williams is a poet in spite of himself. The rhythms won't be suppressed; nor will the color; nor will the fine animal gusto that everywhere vitalizes his work. He is frightfully and joyfully alive. And if he perhaps overdoes his "beginningness," his fear of classic statement or finish, and too much restricts his emotions to the "feeling"

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The four articles on housing by Lewis Mumford, Henry Wright, and Albert Mayer recently published in The New Republic, have been issued in pamphlet form.

Price 25 cents; less in quantities

The New Republic, 421 West 21st Street, New York, N. Y.

plane (or to what can be animally or behavioristically said), so that one must always think of his work rather in the aggregate than in the item, his dogged theory has at least one great merit: it keeps him young; and he is still, at the age of fifty, a promising poet—which is more than can be said of most of us. CONRAD AIKEN.

The Boar and Shibboleth, with Other Poems, by Edward Doro. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 57 pages. $3.50.

MR. DORO is of the modern fantastic school of poets—that is to say, he is by Conrad Stevens out of Wallace Aiken. This method, as used objectively by Stevens, has enriched American literature with a handful of poems able to hold up their heads in any company; as used subjectively by Aiken, it has been responsible for one of the longest and most elaborate explorations of the subconscious on record—an exploration that always starts with high hopes, like Columbus, to end somewhere on the shores of Nomad's Land. Of these two methods, Mr. Doro chooses the latter. His inner explorations are quieter and less exhaustive than those of Aiken: so quiet, in fact, that one might almost say of him that his Pegasus is less of a Hippogriff than a Delanightmare. A critic, on the back cover, declares that reading one of these poems made "the shining armadillo of the Chrysler Building look newer and more beautiful." Poetry as silver polish, in short.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

The Modern Editions Press Pamphlets: Nos. 1-8. Notre Dame des Cadres, by Lincoln Kirstein; A Wreath for Margery, by Horace Gregory; A Sheaf, by Raymond Ellsworth Larsson; Apology for Love, by Kathleen Tankersley Young; Two Poems, by Paul Bowles; Two Poems, by Laurence Vail; Two Poems, by Carl Rakosi; Houdini, by Bob Brown. 4 pages each. 25 cents each.

THE POETS so well printed in the first eight pamphlets of the Modern Editions Press have most of them been as well known inside the world of American poetry as they have been neglected outside it. Their massed work shows a common effort to be simultaneously involved and simple, a common penultimate confusion and evanescent ending-on-a-minor-note.

Paul Bowles in two poems suggests the feeling of the ocean and the feeling of summer heat. Carl Rakosi is still more marine and still more Valéry. Lincoln Kirstein does an antique, rouged and powdered Beardsley portrait of a lady in her picture gallery. Larsson's soughing and almost wordless cadences drift toward Manley Hopkins. Kathleen Tankersley Young cites associations emanating from an incident at love without mentioning the facts of the case. The work of Vail, Brown and Gregory is sturdier. Brown composes an elegy on Houdini in the manner of Dos Passos's chants. Horace Gregory's "A Wreath for Margery," which this reviewer understands to have been badly cut and juggled by the printer, seems genial, but dependent on impressionist pastry for effect. Vail, of all, has purpose and gets results. His savage anger with the refinement and the social usages of the times is the only consuming emotion in the entire series.

The delicacy of their submarine music but lightly veils the fact that these eight poets do not wish to understand themselves, lest they be uncomplex. Together, they and others were once a Pullman on the train of American literature. The locomotive has lately left this particular train and taken another direction. JAMES NEUGASS.

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